



# **THE ALTAR SERVER GUIDE BOOK**

*Notre Dame Catholic Church, Clarendon Hills, IL*

*2014 Edition*

# **ACTIONS OF REVERENCE**

## **Folded Hands**

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

## **Standing**

Altar Servers should stand up straight with their hands properly folded. Their eyes should be focused on the Mass and they should be attentive to whatever the priest or deacon may need.



## **Walking**

Walking should be done with your back straight and head held high. The pace should not be rushed. Hands should be folded above the waist while walking unless the server is carrying something.

## **Sitting**

Sit up straight with the palms of your hands flat against your legs. Both feet should be kept flat on the floor.



## **Silence**

Except for making the proper responses, silence is kept at all times. Nothing is more distracting to the priest or congregation than to see Altar Servers whispering together. The only talking should be your participation in the Mass.

## **Kneeling**

Your body should be upright with your hands folded above your waist.

## **ALTAR SERVING AT NOTRE DAME**

There are 3 Altar Servers assigned to each Saturday evening and Sunday Mass. One person is the Cross Server, and the other two persons are the Candle Servers. Before Mass, Altar Servers will decide themselves who will be responsible for the different roles. A good rule of thumb is that the most similarly heighted servers carry the candles, and the other server carries the cross.

### **GENERAL REMINDERS**

The most important thing to remember is that people look to you to help create an atmosphere of reverence and prayer. Your behavior will either help or hinder the celebration. Be sure to dress neatly:

#### Boys

- Hair neatly combed
- Long pants with a plain, collared shirt
- No prints or team names on shirts
- No jeans
- Dress shoes with dark socks
- No shorts
- No sandals or gym shoes

#### Girls

- No dangly earrings or jewelry
- Nice dress pants or a skirt/dress
- Clothes that are less “flashy” so that they do not show through the alb
- No jeans
- No shorts
- No sandals (including “flip-flops”) or gym shoes

Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass starts. Greet everyone in the sacristy, sign the attendance book, and vest in your alb in the sacristy. Be sure to ask the presider, deacon, or the master of ceremonies (MC) what color cincture to wear for Mass also.



## **THE FOLLOWING THINGS HAVE TO BE DONE BEFORE MASS:**

### ***SUNDAY MASS***

- 1) Light the candles on the altar and next to the ambo.
- 2) Light the processional candles.
- 3) Make sure the water cruet is on the credence table along with the Lavabo dish and towel.
- 4) Make sure the tray is set up with the chalices, purificators, and corporals on the credence table. These are usually prepared by the Presider, Deacon, or MC so any questions should be addressed to them.
- 5) Make sure the wine flagon and paten with hosts are on gift shelf in back of church.
- 6) Make sure the Roman Missal is located on the servers chair closest to the cantor stand.
- 7) Ask Father or Deacon if anything else needs to be done

### ***WEEKDAY MASS***

- 1) Candles are lit on the Altar
- 2) Make sure the water cruet is on the credence table along with the Lavabo dish and towel.
- 3) Make sure the tray is set up with the chalices, purificators, and corporals on the credence table. These are usually prepared by the Presider, Deacon, or MC so any questions should be addressed to them.
- 4) Make sure the Roman Missal is located on the servers chair closest to the cantor stand.
- 5) Ask Father or Deacon if anything else needs to be done.

*After completing these pre-Mass responsibilities, the server may sit in the vesting sacristy with the Presider and Deacon until Mass is ready to begin. A quiet reverent tone of voice should be kept for any talking while in the sacristy. This time before Mass is the time to prepare yourself for the wonderful gift of the Eucharist you are about to receive, and to think of what your intention for Mass will be.*

## ENTRANCE PROCESSION & BEGINNING OF MASS

Please remember when carrying the processional cross and candles to hold them straight at all times. It can be very dangerous to tip a lit candle, plus it is inappropriate to be playing with Liturgical items in church, so please hold them straight at all times.

### Cross Server

Watch the height of the cross.

Do not angle it forward, backward, or side-to-side.

Walk at a steady pace.



### Candle Servers

Keep your hair away from the candle

Do not angle forward, backward, side-to-side

Do not blow out the candle. If the candle happens to go out, there is a lighter located on the shelf where the candles are placed during mass.

Your top hand's elbow should point toward the side of the aisle you are on (i.e. if you are on the right hand side of the aisle, your right hand will be on top, and your right elbow pointing out)

When it is time to begin Mass, the song leader will announce the entrance hymn. The Cross server begins the procession when the WORDS of the hymn begin. It is also appropriate when the words of the hymn begin to look back at the Presider for a nod signaling he is ready also for the procession to begin.

The Cross Server, carrying the processional cross, slowly leads the procession up the center aisle. The two "Candle" Servers carry the processional candles about one (1) pew behind the cross. They are followed by the Lector, Deacon (when there is one) and Presider. When the servers reach the front step of the altar, all three bow together. They then proceed to the stations where the cross and candles are kept. After the cross and candles are put in their bases, the servers proceed together to their chairs. They stand straight with hands folded above waist and look at the Presider as the opening hymn concludes.



## OPENING PRAYER – SERVERS STANDING

The Presider begins Mass saying, "In the Name of the Father..." The Presider (or Deacon) leads us in the penitential rite, followed by the Gloria (during Advent and Lent no Gloria is sung the Presider goes right to the opening prayer). After the Gloria, the Presider will then be ready for the opening prayer. The Cross Server should anticipate the end of the Gloria and be ready to carry the Roman Missal to the Presider. After hearing the line in the Gloria, "in the glory of God the Father. Amen." The Cross Server should take the Roman Missal, holding it upright above their waist and the cover facing outward, and proceed to walk forward from their chair up the stairs, and then make a sharp left towards the Presider. *Don't be alarmed since the Gloria will still be being sung during this time of movement.*

The Presider will say, "Let us pray". At this point, the server is standing in front of the Presider and holding the Roman Missal at a proper level. The Presider may adjust the height of the Missal if necessary. When he finishes the prayer, return to your chair with the Roman Missal taking the same path you took to get him.



All are then seated for the Liturgy of the Word. Be sure to wait for the Cross server to return to their chair so everyone can sit down together at the same

## LITURGY OF THE WORD – SERVERS SITTING

The Lector will proclaim the 1st reading. The Lector will then return to their pew. Then comes the Responsorial Psalm. After the Responsorial Psalm has been sung (or recited), the Lector will then go to the ambo and proclaim the 2nd reading. After the 2nd reading, the Lector will then return to their pew.

## GOSPEL – SERVERS STAND

When the Gospel Acclamation begins (typically the Alleluia), the two Candle servers should go retrieve their candles. They are to then walk and line up side by side on the floor next to where the bells are kept, and wait for the Gospel procession to begin. The Deacon (if present) during this time will go to the Presider and ask for his blessing. Then he will walk down to the Altar and



take the Book of the Gospels. He will elevate the Book of the Gospels, turn towards the servers, and begin walking down the stairs. As he is walking down the stairs, the servers with the candles should begin walking at solemn pace around the sanctuary up to the ambo. Upon reaching the ambo, the servers should walk up the stairs side by side with one server standing on one side of the ambo and the other standing on the step. Both servers should be facing each other at this point with the ambo between them. The servers are to stand with candles upright for the duration of the Gospel. After the Gospel is completed the Deacon will say, “The Gospel of the Lord,” and kiss the Book of the Gospels. After he has kissed the Book of the Gospels the servers are to walk down the ramp single file and place their candles back into their bases. After their candles are back into their bases, the servers return together to their chairs for the homily. The Cross server should also remain standing during this time so all three servers may be seated together. The servers may remain seated during the homily.



## **PREPARING THE ALTAR – SERVERS STAND**

After the homily, Mass continues with the Profession of Faith (Creed), then the Universal Prayer (Petitions). Servers should participate in the Profession of Faith by reciting the Creed with the other members of the congregation. If a server does not know the Creed it can be found in the cover of the hymnal, which is located under their chair. Following the Universal Prayer, the congregation is seated while the Ushers begin the collection. When the Presider sits, the Servers assist the Deacon or MC in preparing the Altar.

The Cross server comes forward with the Roman Missal and its stand, and proceeds up the steps with them. After the Deacon or MC takes it, the Cross server returns to his/her chair and sits.



One of the Candle servers goes to the credence table and retrieves the tray containing the chalices, corporals, and purificators. The tray is heavy, so please be careful carrying it to the altar. Bring the tray to the Deacon or MC at the Altar. After he removes all the items return the tray to the credence table.



## **PREPARING THE GIFTS – SERVERS STAND**

When the Presider and Deacon stand and begin walking to the front of the Altar to receive the gifts, the two Candle servers join them and stand at the front of the Altar on the right-hand side of the Deacon.



The Cross server will go to the credence table and retrieve the water cruet (remove stopper if needed), lavabo dish, and towel. He/She returns to the first step and waits for the other two servers, who received the gifts, to join him/her.



The Deacon will first take the gifts of Bread and Wine. He will first present the Bread to the Presider. He will then take the Wine and pour it into the different chalices. He will then take the water from the Cross server and add a little bit to one of the chalices.



As this is being done, one of the Candle servers will take the towel from the Cross server. The Deacon returns the water cruet to the Cross server holding the lavabo dish. He also gives the empty flagon (pitcher) to the Candle server.



When the Presider turns to wash his hands the server with the towel and the server with the lavabo dish go to the Presider. DON'T MAKE HIM WALK TO YOU. All servers remain at the Altar until the Presider's hands are washed.



After the Presider's hands are washed the servers return together to the credence table. After they have put down the flagon, lavabo dish, and towel, they return to their chairs together and remain standing.

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER – SERVERS STAND



During the Preface (The Lord be with you...Lift up your hearts...), all 3 servers stand at their chairs. At the end of the prayer the “Holy, Holy, Holy” is sung. The servers are to walk to the first step of the Sanctuary next to the Altar where the bells and knee pads are placed after the “Holy, Holy, Holy” has been completed. Servers are to then kneel with their eyes focused on the Altar and their hands folded.

The Cross server is the server responsible for ringing the bells during the elevations of the host and of the chalice. After the Presider says the prayer over the bread (*...This is My Body, which will be given up for you*), he will elevate the host for all to see. At this time the server should gently pick up the bells and ring them three times. The same thing happens with the wine. After the Presider says the prayer over the wine (*...for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me*), he will elevate the chalice for all to see. Once again at this time the server should gently pick up the bells and ring them three times. To properly ring the bells, the server is to gently pick up the bells and gently rotate their wrist back and forth. Plenty of sound will come from the bells as a result of this. There is no need to aggressively shake them back and forth in order that “more sound” might come from them. Once they have completed the third ring, they are to gently place them back on the pillow.

The rest of the Eucharistic prayer will continue and all the servers are to remain kneeling until the completion of the Great Amen.

*\*If you at any time feel sick or feel that you are going to pass out, do not hesitate to tell the server next to you that you don't feel good and immediately go sit down at your chair or go to the working sacristy behind the altar and sit down and get some water to drink. Someone will come shortly after to assist you.\**

## **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST – SERVERS STANDING**

After the Great Amen when the people stand for the Our Father, the servers also rise and stand on the slate floor keeping their hands folded above their waists. They remain standing there until the Sign of Peace.

At the Sign of Peace, exchange a handshake of peace with each other and with the Presider and Deacon. One Altar Server then goes to get the extra ciboria with purificators in between them, and brings them to the Deacon. He/She will then join the other two Servers who go up the stairs of the sanctuary and stand shoulder to shoulder behind the Presider.

## **COMMUNION -SERVERS SITTING**

After receiving communion the Presider and Deacon leave to distribute communion to the congregation. One Candle server will go to the credence table and bring the tray with the water cruet and set it on the Altar. Be sure not to put it on the corporals since particles of the host could be on the corporal. The Cross server will close the Roman Missal and take it along with the stand and will return to their chair. Once these things have been taken care of, the servers may sit while communion is being distributed.

When the Presider and Deacon return to the sanctuary after communion they will purify the Sacred Vessels at the Altar. The tray will be filled with the purified vessels, and will be carried back to the credence table by an Usher or Deacon. If there is no Deacon or Usher one of the servers may need to take the tray back to the credence table. In some cases there may be other items that needed to be handed to the servers to take away, so be attentive.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION – SERVERS STANDING

After purifying the Sacred Vessels, the Presider and Deacon will return to their chairs and will be seated for a few moments of quiet prayer. During this time the Cross server should take the Roman Missal into their arms and be ready to walk right up to the Presider when he stands.

When the Presider stands and says "Let Us Pray", the Cross server brings the Roman Missal to him in the same way he did for the opening prayer. When the Presider finishes, he will close the book and the Server returns to his/her chair. On occasion there may be a special blessing. In these cases, the Presider will place their hand on the Missal signaling the server to keep standing still with the Missal open until he closes the Missal or instructs you to do so. All Servers are to be standing at their chairs for the final blessing.



## RECESSIONAL

After the final blessing, the Deacon says, "Go in Peace" or similar words. After everyone, including the servers, responds "thanks be to God," All 3 Servers go to retrieve the cross and candles and return to the main aisle together. The Cross server stands at the 3rd pew back, and the Candle servers stand at the 2nd pew back. All servers are to be facing toward the Altar while waiting to process back.



When the Deacon and Presider genuflect and turn around to walk down the aisle, this should signal the servers to turn around and proceed toward the back.



Once in the back, servers should return the cross and the candles to their respective stands. Watch out for parishioners leaving as it can be very busy in the back after Mass, and be polite if anyone speaks to you.

## **THINGS TO DO AFTER MASS**

Once the hymn has finished, there are some things that the altar servers need to do before they find their family and go home.

- Put out candles with brass snuffer. Do not blow them out.
- Refill the water cruet.
- Empty and dry the lavabo dish and place it back on the credence table.
- Hang your alb and cincture in their proper places in the vesting sacristy.  
If you see any albs or cinctures on the floor, PLEASE be helpful by hanging those up as well.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You are responsible for being present at the Masses you are scheduled to serve. If you cannot be present, it is your responsibility to find a substitute. If you inform us ahead of your scheduled time to serve and your substitute fails to show, the substitute will be marked absent, not you.

After 3 unexcused absences, a card will be sent home to the parents to make them aware of the problem. If another unexcused absence occurs, the child will not be eligible to participate in the Altar Serving Ministry. If a child would like to be reinstated into the program after these unexcused absences, a meeting would have to be scheduled with the server, the parent, Training Coordinator, and a priest from the parish.

# TERMS TO KNOW

**PRESIDER:** The priest who is celebrating the Mass.

**DEACON:** Ordained man with specific roles in Mass assisting the priest.

**LECTOR:** Lay person who proclaims the Scripture readings at Mass.

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER:** Lay person who helps distribute the Eucharist at Mass.

**CANTOR:** Lay person who is the song leader at Mass

**USHER:** Lay person who welcomes and collects the monetary gifts of the people at Mass

**SACRISTAN:** Lay person who takes care of cleaning linens, vessels, and other things in the church.

**ASSEMBLY:** The people who gather for Mass

**SANCTUARY:** General area where the altar, ambo, and presider's chair are located.

**ALTAR:** The table where the Mass is celebrated.

**AMBO:** The lectern where the Scriptures are proclaimed.

**CREDENCE TABLE:** Table behind the altar that holds the chalices, ciboria, etc. used at Mass.

**CHALICE:** Metal cup like vessel with a stem. The presider's chalice will typically be larger and gold or silver.

**PATEN:** Shallow plate like dish used for the presider's large host.

**PURIFICATOR:** Small napkin like linen cloth used to wipe the chalice.

**PALL:** Stiff square piece that goes on top of the chalice.

**CORPORAL:** Square linen cloth placed on the altar that is meant to catch particles that might come off the sacred host.

**CIBORIA:** Deep vessel that holds the small hosts for the assembly. The one in the tabernacle will have a lid.

**CRUETS:** Vessels for the water and wine.

**ROMAN MISSAL:** Large red book with many ribbons that contains the prayers for Mass.

**BOOK OF THE GOSPELS:** Ceremonial book containing the Gospel readings used at Mass.

**GIFT ALCOVE:** Recess within the wall in the back of church where the gifts are placed.

**PROCESSIONAL CROSS:** The crucifix on a pole used for processions.

**PROCESSIONAL CANDLES:** The candles carried in processions.

**SANCTUARY LAMP:** Red candle that is always lit near the tabernacle signaling Jesus is present in the Eucharist inside the tabernacle.

**BOAT:** Container that holds grains of incense before they are burned.

**CENSOR / THURIBLE:** Container for charcoal that incense is put in to in order to create holy smoke.

**FUNERAL PALL:** Large cloth that is placed over the casket.

**HOLY WATER BUCKET:** Container that holds holy water and the aspergillum.

**ASPERGILLUM:** Device used to sprinkle the assembly with holy water.

**ALB:** White robe that ministers (altar servers, deacons, priests) wear at Mass and other liturgies.

**CINCTURE:** A belt made of rope like material worn with an alb.

**FLAGON:** A large pitcher that holds the wine.

**LAVABO DISH:** A dish used to catch the water when washing the Presider's hands.

**VESTING SACRISTY:** The room in the back of the church where vestments and sacred books are kept. It is also the place where the Priests, Deacons, and servers vest for Mass.

**WORKING SACRISTY:** The room located behind the Altar where sacred vessels, wine, hosts, etc. are stored.

# NOTES: