

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALTAR SERVERS SACRED HEART PARISH, ANDERSON

SCHEDULING: Altar Servers are scheduled a month in advance. Schedules are usually available to be picked up at church on the last weekend of the month for the following month. The schedule for the month is also posted in the ministers' room.

CONFLICTS, SICKNESS, ETC.: It is the responsibility of each server to show up for the Mass for which he/she has been scheduled. In the event of a conflict, **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH SERVER TO ARRANGE FOR A SUBSTITUTE** from the phone list of servers.

PUNCTUALITY: Altar servers should arrive at church at least 10 minutes before Mass. The server should vest immediately after arrival in alb and cincture.

CLOTHING, APPEARANCE: The ministry of altar server is a public one and calls for reverence, appropriate dress and behavior. Hands, face and hair should be clean and neat. Excessive jewelry should not be worn. Shoes should be in good repair and clean.

PROCEDURE FOR SERVING AT MASS:

1. **VESTING:** Each server vests in alb and cincture. The liturgical calendar in the ministers' room will tell you which color cincture to wear.
2. **PRAYER BEFORE MASS:** Just before Mass begins, the priest and all the ministers, including altar servers, gather together for a short prayer.
3. **ENTRANCE PROCESSION:** The procession is led by the Cross-bearer with the other two servers following side by side and allowing a space of about four pews behind the Cross-bearer. The procession begins as soon as the singing begins.
4. **SERVER'S PLACES IN SANCTUARY:** When the Cross-bearer arrives at the foot of the altar, he/she does NOT bow but immediately goes to place the cross on its stand and then to the first chair. The other two servers bow in unison at the foot of the altar and go between the altar and the ambo to the second and third chairs. They remain standing.
5. **OPENING PRAYER:** After the opening song and the priest's introduction is finished, the server in the first chair takes the book (Sacramentary) to the priest or deacon. When the Introductory Prayers are completed, the priest or deacon will close the book and the altar server returns the book to the credence table and goes to his/her chair. After the Gloria is sung, the server brings the book back to the priest for the Opening Prayer.
6. **READINGS:** When the priest sits for the readings, the servers also sit and remain attentive to the readings. At the Alleluia, the servers stand when the priest stands and remain standing through the Gospel reading. They then sit for the homily.

7. **CREED, GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:** After the homily, the servers stand when the priest stands for the recitation of the Creed and General Intercessions. At their conclusion all will again sit.

8. **PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR:** As soon as the greeters begin to take up the collection, the altar servers set the altar. The server in the first chair takes the two corporals to the altar, places them with the red cross down, carefully unfolds the small one on the right side of the altar and then unfolds the large one on the center. The server in the second chair places the chalice on the smaller corporal on the little red cross. The book is placed near the left side of the large corporal and left closed. When each task is finished, the server returns to his/her chair. When all servers are at their chair, all sit together.

9. **OFFERTORY PROCESSION:** When the priest or deacon stands, the servers stand and join him at the foot of the altar to receive the gifts from the offertory procession. Servers will be handed items from the procession as they are received by the priest or deacon. The priest or deacon returns to the altar **FIRST** followed by the altar servers. The server with the carafe should wait for the stopper. The server with the collection places it in front of the altar. The first server immediately goes to the credence table and brings the small cruet of water and waits for priest or deacon to pour a small amount into the wine and then takes the cruet back to the credence table.

10. **WASHING OF HANDS:** After the priest has offered the bread and wine, he will wash his hands. Servers bring the bowl, pitcher of water, and hand towel with the holder of the bowl standing in the middle. (If serving alone, pour water into the bowl and bring only the bowl and towel)

11. **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER:** The servers remain standing through the Eucharistic Prayer. At the Consecration, they bow when the priest bows or genuflects.

12. **OUR FATHER:** After the singing of the Great Amen, the servers join the priest at the altar and join hands with him for the Our Father.

13. **EXCHANGE OF PEACE:** The servers wait for the exchange of peace from the priest and deacon and then exchange a sign of peace with each other. Then all go and stand in a line in front of the candles to await reception of Holy Communion.

14. **COMMUNION:** The servers will receive from the priest and then from the Eucharistic Minister. They should remain in place until the priest and Eucharistic Ministers begin the distribution of communion.

15. **AFTER COMMUNION:** The altar servers will begin to clear the altar as soon as the priest and Eucharistic Ministers begin the distribution of communion. Everything should be taken off the altar and put on the credence table except for the large corporal. Each server will remove what he/she put on the altar. After this is completed, the servers return to their chairs and remain standing until the end of communion.

16. **CLOSING PRAYER:** When communion is finished and the priest returns to his chair for a short time of silent meditation and for the meditation hymn. One server then brings the book (Sacramentary) to the priest and holds the book for the Closing Prayer. When the priest completes the prayers he will close the book and the server returns the book to the credence table.

17. **RECESSIONAL:** At the end of Mass, after the priest goes to kiss the altar, the altar servers follow him to the step in front of the altar. The server in the first chair stands behind the priest at the first pew and the other two servers go to stand on either side of him. Everyone bows when the priest bows. The procession is led out by the first server walking alone. The other two servers follow behind, leaving a spacing of four pews.

18. **AFTER MASS:** Following Mass, the servers remove their vestments and hang them up neatly in the cabinet in the ministers' room. If a vestment has become soiled and needs washing, the server should call it to the attention of John DeJong our sacristan.

SENIOR SERVER AWARD: Altar Servers who are in eighth grade are recognized in a special ceremony in the fall. Each person is given a wood cross engraved with their name to wear each time they serve at Mass. All servers are encouraged to continue through high school in this ministry.