

ST. ELIZABETH PASTORATE

ST. CLEMENT | ST. JOSEPH | ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST | ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST | ST. PATRICK



Altar Servers

Training Manual

Updated August 2021

ALTAR SERVERS
in the St. Elizabeth Pastorate

Revised August 2021

Prayer Before Serving Mass

*O Jesus, today I have the opportunity to pray
in a very special way
by serving you and this parish
as an altar server.*

*Help me to do my ministry well
and to focus on You.*

*Help me not to become distracted
and to do my best
as I help Father and our parish
at this special meal.*

*Today I offer my mass prayers for: _____
(Think of who you want to pray for).*

*Thank you for this special honor!
Amen.*

THANK YOU for assisting as an altar server. It is a great way to participate in the Mass as well as serve your parish community. You are **always** welcome to fill in to serve no matter which parish you attend for Mass. The directions for altar servers within the St. Elizabeth Pastorate are very similar in each parish. The altar servers have an important role in the liturgy and your service is greatly appreciated! Whenever you serve at Mass, you are serving God and His people! Because of this, remember to come to mass dressed in an appropriate manner (nice clothes, cleanly put together, and please no flip-flops).

GENERAL NOTES

- The two “main” servers will always travel in pairs. They’ll always move at the same time, bring things to the altar together, set them down at the same time, take things away at the same time, etc.
- When bringing the bread and wine to the altar, never place it on the altar! Wait to have the Deacon or Priest take it from you—especially at the offertory: gifts are to be placed on the altar by the presider. The server who has the large ciboria/plate with hosts should hold it until either the deacon takes it and hands it directly to the presider, or the presider takes it himself.
- Hands should be folded when processing into mass if you are not carrying the candles or crucifix. It is never appropriate to have your hands in your pockets.

BEFORE MASS

- Arrive in the Sacristy at least 15 minutes before Mass begins (If you have not arrived by 10 minutes before Mass, you might be replaced!)
- Wash and dry your hands
- Choose a clean server’s alb that is the appropriate size for you (the alb should reach your ankles. Wear the appropriate colored cord around your waist (ask the Sacristan or Priest which color to use).
- Make sure the Missal (the large red book used by the priest) is at your place in the first pew.
- Check that there is a hymnal in the first pew for you to participate in mass. Altar servers are first a part of the assembly of everyone gathered at church, so it is expected that you are singing and saying the prayers along with everyone else.
- Make sure all altar candles are lit at least 10 minutes before Mass begins!

+ HOW TO SERVE AT MASS +

1. ENTRANCE PROCESSION

- The cross-bearer goes first, followed by the two servers who will walk together slowly up the center aisle. The procession begins when the singing starts, not just when the music begins.
- On special occasions (Christmas, Easter, and other holidays) you may be asked to carry in candles. The servers carry the two candles, which will be placed near the Ambo. Remember to bring them to the back of church with you along with matches/a lighter to light them.
- When you reach the head of the center aisle, each server should move to the side of the center aisle, stop, and wait for the priest to genuflect.
- If you are **NOT** carrying the cross/candles, genuflect all together with the priest
- If you **ARE** carrying the cross/candles, simply bow your head while everyone else genuflects at the altar.
- The priest will then kiss the altar and the servers will place the cross and candles in their proper locations. Afterwards, servers take their place in the front pew near the presider's chair.

2. OPENING PRAYER

- When the priest says "Let us pray," the crossbearer will bring the Missal (red book) up to the priest. **The same altar server will always be responsible for this book throughout the Mass.**
- Bring the book to the priest and he will open and set the height at which he wants it to be held. If you are shorter than the priest, stand in front of Father. If you are taller, stand to Father's left and hold the book on your arm. *Taller altar servers: be careful not to stand directly in front of the priest — make sure everyone can always see the priest.
- When the priest is finished with the opening prayers, take the book back to the pew with you (Do not put it on the altar).

3. LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Participate fully during the Liturgy of the Word from the front pew, closest to the priest's chair. *Participate and pay attention.*

4. PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

- When the ushers begin taking up the collection, the servers go to the credence table and the cross-bearer comes forward with the Missal (red book), places it on the altar, and removes the Book of the Gospel stand (if there is one). Afterwards, the cross-bearer waits with the other servers at the credence table. Servers should wait until the priest or deacon is at the altar; the cross-bearer brings the chalice and the other servers bring the tray with the cups and purificators from the credence table to the altar.
- When the priest or deacon goes to receive the gifts, both servers come and stand next to him, one on each side. When the gifts are brought forward, one server takes the collection from the priest/deacon and sets it in front of the altar. Then one server takes the hosts from the priest or deacon, the other server takes the wine. The server with the hosts goes to the altar and waits for the hosts to be taken by the priest or deacon. *Please do not place them on the altar yourself.* The server with the wine waits at the side of the altar until the other server goes to the credence table and gets the cruet of water. If you bring cruets to the altar, *have the handles facing the priest and be sure to take out the stoppers first.* Wait for the priest or deacon to finish pouring the water and wine in the cup(s), and then *together* return the cruets or wine pitcher to the credence table.
- *After you return to the credence table, one server has the bowl AND pitcher; the other has the towel unfolded and ready to use.* The cross-bearer waits at the credence table at this time unless we have been using incense; then the cross-bearer would be handling that. BOTH servers wait until the presider dries his hands and then go back to the table, and return to your place in the front pew.
- When it comes time for the **Holy, Holy**, kneel on the first step in front of the altar. The cross-bearer is on the left side of the center aisle; the two other servers on the right side of the center aisle.

5. CONSECRATION AND THE BELLS

- While kneeling (after the Holy, Holy), watch for the priest to hold his hands out over the chalice and hosts—ring the bells ONCE.
- Ring the bells THREE SEPARATE TIMES during the consecration. When the priest holds up the HOST and says “Do this in memory of me.” at the consecration, ring the bells three times. Wait to put the bells down until the priest genuflects. Allow the bells to ring, do not stop the sound prematurely.
- When the priest holds up the chalice with the PRECIOUS BLOOD at the consecration after saying “Do this in memory of Me,” ring the bells again for three times. Wait to set the bells down/stop the sound until the priest genuflects.

6. THE LORD’S PRAYER

- After the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, return to your pew.
- All altar servers will receive Communion first in line from their pew.

7. AFTER COMMUNION

- After taking the communion vessels back to the credence table after Communion, the cross-bearer will go to the altar and retrieve the Roman Missal (red book) and bring it back to the server’s pew.

8. PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- After Communion, the priest will be seated in the presider’s chair to make his thanksgiving prayer. When the priest stands and says, “Let us pray,” the cross-bearer comes forward with the Missal for the post-Communion prayer, blessing, and dismissal. Then the server will return to their pew with the Missal. *Never put the Missal back on the altar.*

9. CLOSING RECESSION

- Wait until the priest begins to move toward the altar during the final hymn. At that time, the cross-bearer goes to get the cross and the two servers get the candles from the altar (if they were carried in), and meet the priest at the head of the center aisle. Genuflect/bow all together at the front of the altar before recessing out of church.

AFTER MASS

- Make sure the candles are extinguished, using the snuffer, so wax isn't blown onto the carpet.
- Empty the bowl and pitcher, bring the cruets, towel, and anything else left on the credence table back to the sacristy and set them on the counter.
- PLEASE carefully hang up and button your server's alb and colored rope. Return everything in the closet in the correct location (by size!). If the alb you wore needs cleaning/mending, give it to the sacristan or priest.
- BEFORE LEAVING: ask the priest if there is anything else you can assist with.

TERMS/ITEMS EVERY SERVER SHOULD KNOW

- **Purificator:** This is the small white linen "napkin" which the priest or communion minister uses to wipe the chalice after drinking from it.
- **Corporal:** This is a large white linen cloth put on the center of the altar upon which are set the chalice and paten for Mass.
- **Censor:** This is the vessel that is used to incense during the Mass. It is on a long chain and the priest uses it to swing while blessing with incense. It is used on special occasions like Christmas, Easter, or funerals.
- **Boat:** This is the small boat-shaped or bowl-shaped container that holds the incense and small spoon. Bring the boat to the priest when using the censor. The priest will fill the censor with incense found in the boat.
- **Easter (Pascal) Candle:** This is the very tall candle, blessed at the Easter Vigil and is in the sanctuary for all of the 50 days of the Easter Season. It is also used at all baptisms and funerals. Sometimes it is difficult to light given its height so help may be needed from other servers, the sacristan, deacon, or priest. Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- **Missal:** This is the large red book that the priest uses during the Mass. It is held by the server at the chair and placed on the altar by the cross-bearer when the collection begins. It is taken from the altar to the pew by the cross-bearer at the Sign of Peace.
- **Lectionary:** This is the book used by the Lector and by the priest to proclaim the Word of God. It is also red and looks like the Missal, but it is on the Ambo and the Lector brings this book to its proper place. The altar servers shouldn't have to worry about this book.
- **Book of the Gospels:** This is the book carried in procession by the deacon and is placed in the stand on the altar. It is used by the deacon or priest to proclaim the Gospel.

- **NOTE:** Altar Servers should make every effort to get a sub if they are not able to fulfill their scheduled ministry. It is unfair to assume someone else will just “fill in.” Contact the St. Elizabeth Pastorate office if assistance is needed for submitting a sub request and/or finding someone to fill in for you.
- Questions, comments, concerns: contact Krystal Smith, the Director of Liturgy, at the St. Elizabeth Pastorate office:

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