

- Presider** A name used for the priest, deacon, or other person who is leading the community's prayer.
- Purificator** The cloth napkin used with the chalice. Every chalice needs its own purificator.
- Roman Missal**  
The reddish book with the main prayers for the presider. Previously called the Sacramentary
- Sacrarium** The special sink in the sacristy which drains into the earth rather than the sewer system; for blessed water to be disposed of properly.
- Sacristy** The room where we prepare for Mass and where Mass supplies are kept.
- Sanctuary** The raised platform area where the altar, ambo, presider's chair, and tabernacle are located.
- Sanctuary Lamp**  
The candle on the wall near the tabernacle.
- Tabernacle** The golden box-like container, where consecrated hosts are kept after Mass.

# Serving at the Altar

*SS. John  
and Paul*  

---

**P A R I S H**

**Remember : Always get your own sub.  
The Server Schedule is online at  
[ssjohnandpaul.org](http://ssjohnandpaul.org). If you have any  
questions please contact  
Matt Hunt at  
586-781-9010**

Revised, September 2019

**We are very happy that you have agreed to be altar servers. It is a very important role. Serving well helps everyone to celebrate Mass better.**

- Most importantly, serving at the altar means always maintaining an attitude of honor and respect. We are there to pray and give God worship and help everyone else do the same. Everything we do is aimed at this important end.
- Show honor and respect for the Mass, the people, the priest, and the other liturgical ministers by being on time.
- Show honor and respect for the people assembled for prayer by not drawing attention to yourself by unnecessary talking, fidgeting, sloppy posture, etc... Look like you want to be there. Pray and sing.
- Show honor and respect for yourself by good grooming and appropriate attire. Find an alb that fits. Wear shoes/sandals that are in good condition. No flip-flops. They call attention to you every step you take.
- Show honor and respect for your fellow servers by hanging up your alb or putting away others that are out of place.
- Serving at the altar is an honor. Always conduct yourself in a way that commands respect.
- Be in church at least 15 minutes before Mass.
- Always try to get a substitute when you cannot be there as scheduled. If you need another altar server roster with names and phones, call the parish office. If you've tried 3-4 others and still no substitute, call the parish office to let us know you won't be there.
- Sign in the book on the podium in the room next to the sacristy. If you are a substitute, add "sub for" and list who you are a sub for.
- Dress in alb, cincture (rope belt, proper color), and cross.
- Light the candles. Use the lighter in the drawer and light the wax taper. Be sure to control the flame. When finished make sure the wax taper extends out of the candle lighter so that it doesn't get stuck. New tapers are in the sacristy, if needed.

## Words We Should All Know

- Altar: The central table around which we all gather to celebrate the Eucharist. It is a symbol of Christ and so is always treated with dignity.
- Alb: The white garment priests wear under the chasuble and servers wear with a cincture (rope).
- Ambo: The stand from which The Word of God is proclaimed.
- Blessed Sacrament  
The consecrated bread and wine, which can be reserved in the tabernacle.
- Book of the Gospels  
A book with all the gospel readings, carried in procession and placed on the altar
- Chalice: The cup used at Mass for the wine.
- Ciborium: The bowl or dish for the bread used at Mass. The plural is ciboria.
- Cincture: The rope belt that is used with an alb. Different colors for different seasons and feasts.
- Corporal: The larger square white cloth used on the altar. The bread and wine are placed on the corporal. The corporal is not to be shaken but folded and unfolded carefully to contain any fragments of the Eucharist.
- Credence or Serving Table  
The small tables way up front on which we place the bowl for washing hands, additional chalices and purificators, and other needed items.
- Cruet: A glass or ceramic container for water or wine.
- Lectionary: The book from which the lector proclaims The Word of God.
- Pall: A word that means "covering", used for two items: The cardboard cover sometimes placed on the chalice; and the cloth covering for the casket at a funeral.

to a spot 10 feet from the tile, in the center of the aisle, facing the altar. If there are two servers, the one without the cross with stand behind the cross bearer and to the right of the altar, facing the altar; Fr will be to your left on the floor. If there are three servers, the two without the cross, will stand on either side of Fr. facing the altar.

- When the presider bows, only the servers with empty hands bow toward the altar. If he genuflects, (kneel with right knee to the floor) toward the tabernacle, genuflect with him. Then everyone will turn and proceed toward the back of the church. .
- Remember what was said about the entrance procession.
- Walk normally. Don't crawl. Don't hurry. Keep three arms length between you and the person in front of you.
- The cross bearer will lead. Walk about 10 feet past the baptismal font, stop and turn around. The others will join him. Fr. will stop and bow toward the cross. (except when its Fr. Ron or visiting priest). Place the cross on the wall and begin clean-up procedures.
- If another Mass is to follow, you may leave the candles burning. If it is the last Mass of the day, SNUFF the candles with the candle lighter. DO NOT blow them out because the wax will get all over.
- Return any empty wine or water cruets on the serving table to the sacristy. Usually the towel and the corporal are usable for the next Mass. If not, they can be put into the laundry basket in the servers' closet.
- Carefully hang up your alb, cincture and cross. Be courteous and pick up any other ones that are not hung properly.
- If your alb is dirty, torn, or stained, DO NOT just put it back. Place what needs cleaning or repair in the laundry basket.
- We need your help to keep what you wear looking good.
- Ask if anything else needs to be done.

## How to Prepare for Mass

Take globes off of candle stands when lighting—two of you should do this.

- Carry the bread and wine to the gift table in the back of the church.
- Put the tray with the chalices, water pitcher, purificators, coporal, and pall on table to the right of the altar.
- NB: on the table to the right of the altar, you will need the water bowl and towel. The communion minister side table has the extra chalice(s) and purificator(s) and communion host bowls (ciboria).
- When there are at least two servers, one is designated as the cross bearer and one as the book bearer. When there are at least two servers, after you set the altar go to the back by the gift table and wait for Fr. to come down in front of the altar.
- Make sure the Roman Missal (large red book) is by your chair before the start of the Mass.

## The Entrance Procession

- Double check everything including that all vessels are in place. Always ask if you are unsure about anything. Never be afraid to ask a question.
- We process from the back of the church.
- The cross bearer starts walking when we begin to sing, not when the antiphon is sung or the organ starts to play. Wait until we begin to sing.
- Walk at a normal pace. Do not crawl. Do not hurry.
- Carry the cross reasonably high. It balances best if you place one hand slightly below the crosspiece and one hand further down.
- During procession do not split around the baptismal font.
- Any additional servers process just in front of the presider (behind gospel bearer). Leave at least 10 ft distance between you and the person in front of you. You should not be able to

reach out and touch them. Get no closer than that all the way up to the front.

- When the procession arrives at the altar, the cross bearer goes directly to the cross stand on right of altar and places it in the stand. Only those without a symbol of Christ in their hands (priest, extra servers, etc.) stop and bow toward the altar and genuflect (kneel with right knee down to the floor) to the tabernacle before proceeding to their chairs. When the server(s) get to their chairs, remain standing.

### **Responsibilities Around the Altar**

- When the priest says “Let us pray,” the book bearer brings the Roman Missal, and stands in front of the presider’s chair. After the presider finishes the prayer, you say “Amen”, then bow slightly and return to your seat.
- Listen attentively to the Scripture readings. Sit up straight. Stand with dignity. Even when you are not doing something, people are watching. You are still performing a public action and should act in a way that shows honor, reverence and respect to God and his people.
- At the conclusion of the prayers of the faithful, as the ushers begin the collection, the servers will approach the altar. One server will bring the Roman Missal and place it on the lower left side of the altar, and remain there. The other server will take the tray from the side table and place it on the upper right side of the altar. The priest’s chalice should be towards the bottom of the altar. Then both servers will go to the back of the church to lead the procession with gifts. When you reach the back of the church, stop to the left of the baptismal font, turn around and face the altar. When processing both directions (toward and away from the altar) walk side by side with hands in prayer formation.
- When the presider is ready to receive the gifts, start down the center of the aisle. When you reach the presider, stand on each side of him facing the congregation. Fr. will hand you the gifts and you will place them on the corporal on the altar.

- One Server will get the bowl and towel, unfold it and place it over his/her arm. The other server waits by the presiders chair. When he is read to wash his hands, both servers go to the altar. This happens immediately after he pours the water into the wine. He will hand the cruet of water to the server without the bowl and towel. After he finishes washing his hands, take the cruet, bowl and towel back to the table. Fold the towel and place it under the bowl. If there are 3 servers, Fr. will hand the third server the empty wine pitcher and they will take it back to the side table. All servers then return to their seats.
- At Sign of Peace walk up to Fr. Festus first to offer peace.
- At communion time, servers get extra host bowls (ciboria) from table on right of altar and place them on the altar. Come up to the altar and stand behind the priest in the center. If Fr. hasn't given you the empty wine cruet, walk up to him, take the empty wine cruet, and place it on the table.
- Put the Roman Missal on the table near the altar servers’ chairs. After you receive communion (the consecrated bread), if you want to receive from the cup, you may receive it at the same time as the Communion Ministers. After receiving, go back to your seat and sing the communion hymn along with everyone else. No talking! When you see that the priest is done washing his chalice, come and take the tray off of the altar and place it on table on right side of altar.
- When the priest uses a chair at the altar, one server, after receiving communion, takes and places the chair on the floor level against the steps, so the priest can sit in it to distribute communion. After Communion is done, that chair is taken and placed in the row of chairs by the organ.
- After communion the priest will be sitting and look to servers for the Roman Missal for the prayer after communion. The book bearer brings the Roman Missal and stands in front of the presider to hold the Roman Missal. Make a slight bow to Fr. after the Amen.
- After the final hymn begins, and when the priest moves to the altar to kiss the altar, the cross bearer gets the cross and proceeds