

St Charles Borromeo Altar Server Handbook

(11/18/2016)

Motto

I have come not to be served but to serve And to offer my best for the greater glory of God
(Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam)

Altar Server Prayer

O Jesus, my King and Lord,
By the grace of the heavenly Father
And the power of the Holy Spirit,
Guide me in righteousness
As I serve you today at the altar
So I may be always worthy of your presence.
If I happen to make a mistake, May it be a lesson
So my service will be perfect tomorrow.
Jesus, I love you with all my heart.

Duties of Altar Servers

Head Server/ Cross Bearer (HS/CB)

- Head Server/Cross Bearer (HS/CB)
- Roman Missal on servers' bench, light the candles
- Greets people at the door before Mass
- Carries the cross at the head of the entrance procession
- At the Offertory, removes the bookstand from the altar
- Opens the Roman Missal to its proper place and places it on the altar
- In the absence of a deacon, receives the bread at the front of the sanctuary and places it on the right side of the corporal on the altar.
- Hands the water with top removed to candle bearer 2
- Sends the candle bearers forward to wash the priest's hands at the proper time
- Rings the bells at the Epiclesis and Consecration
- Brings the extra ciborium to the priest after the Sign of Peace
- Leads the candle bearers through the sacristy to receive communion
- Removes the Roman Missal from the altar during the distribution of communion
- Leads the final procession
- Returns the cross to its stand

Candle Bearer 1

- Carries a candle five steps behind the cross bearer
- Holds the Roman Missal for the priest for the opening and closing prayers
- Processes the candle at stage left of the altar to the ambo during the reading of the Gospel
- Helps the HS/CB to set the altar
- Stands to the left of candle bearer 2 to receive the book of intentions. Takes the book of intentions and places it on the altar in front of the tabernacle to the left of the corporal.
- Holds the water bowl for the washing of the priest's hands
- Processes out following the cross bearer
- Blows out the candles and puts them back in their stands

Candle Bearer 2

- Carries a candle five steps behind the cross bearer
- Processes the candle at stage right of the altar to the ambo during the reading of the Gospel
- Stands to the left of the priest to receive the decanter of wine. Stands with the wine and water on the top step to hand them to the priest
- Holds the finger towel for the washing of the priest's hands
- Processes out following the cross bearer
- Blows out the candles and puts them back in their stands

Preparation for Mass

Arrival

- Arrive 15 minutes early for Mass and go to the Sacristy. If altar servers arrive less than 5 minutes before Mass, they will not serve.
- Greet the adult leader and sign in.
- Greet the priest and deacon with a firm handshake by saying:

"Good morning Father, my name is _____, I am your altar server today."

- Get robed for serving.
- Say a prayer with the other servers and with Father.
- HS/CB prepare the altar. Candle bearers move to the back of the church to greet people as they enter.

Alb

- The server should choose an alb that comes right above the anklebone.
- The servers should come dressed in Sunday best: Collared shirt for the guys, nice shirt or dress for the girls. No t-shirts. Jeans must be "nice" jeans. Shoes must be black. Girls' shoes must be close toed.
- The server should be sure not to wear anything too brightly colored as it will show through the alb.

Posture

- Anytime a server is walking, standing, or kneeling hands should be folded with fingers interlaced at the sternum.
- When a server is seated, hands should be folded in the lap or resting on the thighs.
- Those are the only appropriate places for the hands.
- Posture should never be slouched.
- The attention of the server (including the eyes) should always be on what is taking place in the liturgy.
- Never rush while walking. Always look calm and collected.
- The only times servers should be sitting down are during the readings, the homily and after the priest sits down after communion.
- Never draw unnecessary attention to yourself.

Back of Church

- Greet people outside the church until the announcements begin.
- While the announcements are being read the servers should line up. The cross comes first, followed by the two candles.
- If there are only one or two altar servers then they do not use the candles.

The Mass

Opening Procession

- After the opening hymn begins, the head server/cross bearer should look to the priest who will give a signal that it is time to start walking.
- If there are candle bearers they should let the cross bearer take five steps before beginning to walk.
- When the HS/CB gets to the step he or she should proceed directly to the cross stand and then to his or her seat.
- When the candle bearers get to the step they should proceed directly to the candle stands and then move to their seats. Never walk behind the altar.
- Anytime a server crosses in front of the altar without carrying something, the server should stop briefly and bow the head.

Holding the Book (Roman Missal)

- In the absence of a deacon, candle bearer 1 holds the book for the priest.
- The altar server is to have his or her palms up to hold the left and right side of the book and let the top of the book lean on his or her chest.
- After the prayer is over the altar server returns to his or her seat with the book.

Gospel

- At the start of the Alleluia, each candle bearer goes and stands by one candle.
- When the priest begins his procession from the altar with the Book of the Gospels, they also begin to move.
- The candle bearers stand on each side of the ambo for the reading of the Gospel.
- Once the reading and the singing are over and the homily begins, the altar servers return the candles to their stands, bow together at the center in front of the altar, and sit down.

Offertory

While the collection is being taken:

- The HS/CB prepares the altar by first removing the bookstand. Then the HS/CB brings the book to the altar, places it in the middle, and opens to the prayers for the preparation of the gifts. HS/CB is aided by candle bearer 1 to set the chalices and purificators on the altar, lining them up vertically.
- If there is a deacon, then candle bearer 1 and candle bearer 2 receive the gifts in their usual places. Candle bearer 2 receives the wine and then receives the water from the HS/CB before moving to stand with wine and water beside the altar on the top step. Candle bearer 1 receives the book of intentions and places it in front of the tabernacle to the left of the corporal.
- If there is no deacon, then the HS/CB should stand to the right of the priest to receive the bread and immediately move (to the right facing the altar) to place the ciborium on the top right corner of the corporal. The HS/CB then picks up the cruet of water, removes the top, and meets candle bearer 2 to hand it to him or her.
- Candle bearer 2 receives the decanter of wine. He or she then receives the water from the HS/CB and handing off the top from the decanter, stands on the top step of the sanctuary next to the altar with water and wine in

hand. When this is completed, candle bearer 2 moves immediately to wash the hands of the priest. The HS/CB will have the finger towel ready to hand to him or her.

- Candle bearer 1 receives the book of intentions and places it in front of the tabernacle to the left of the corporal. Then candle bearer 1 prepares to wash the priest's hands by picking up the bowl.
- At this time, the two candle bearers should take the towel and bowl of water and stand in position on the top step away from the altar. When the priest bows, they step to the top of the sanctuary to wash the priest's hands.
- Servers should bow their heads to the priest whenever they complete the tasks of either handing the wine and water or washing the hands. The priest will bow back to them.
- When the Offertory is completed, servers should get in place for kneeling.

Eucharistic Prayer

- When everyone kneels the HS/CB should get ready to ring the bells.
- When he or she sees the priest move from having his hands up at his sides to down over the gifts (the Epiclesis) then he or she gives one short ring of the bells.
- Next, when the priest raises the host high in the air (the Consecration), he or she rings the bells three times. There should be a slight pause between each ring.
- Next, when the priest raises the chalice high in the air (the Consecration), he or she rings the bells three times. Again, there should be a pause between each ring.

Sign of Peace

- After shaking the priest's hand, the HS/CB goes and gets the ciborium and brings it up to the priest or deacon.
- Next, the altar servers go through the sacristy and stand next to the extraordinary ministers of communion.
- After receiving communion, they return through the sacristy to their place where they should all kneel in front of their seats (not on the step). When the priest sits down, they too may be seated.
- The HS/CB should remove the book from the altar while the distribution of communion is taking place, and then he or she also kneels.

Prayer after Communion

- In the absence of a deacon, when the priest stands, candle bearer 1 brings the book to the priest for the closing prayer.
- After the prayer then the priest will invite the children to receive their bulletins.
- The two candle bearers should help give these out and then return to their seats.
- If there is a special blessing and no deacon then the priest will ask candle bearer 1 to wait next to him in order to hold the book.

Final Procession

- After the final blessing, the altar servers get the cross and the candles. The HS/CB stands level with the third pew and faces the altar.
- The candle bearers stand level with the first pew in front of the cross bearer.
- When the priest bows, the HS/CB turns and begins to walk. He or she does not bow.

- The candle bearers wait for the cross bearer to go five steps and begin to walk. They also do not bow.

After Mass

- The altar servers put the cross back and blow the candles out and put them back. The HS/CB brings the water and wine cruets back into the sacristy.
- They hang their albs back up neatly, in their proper places.
- They all say goodbye to the adult leader.