

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH
DUTIES OF ALTAR SERVERS

BEFORE MASS

- Arrive 15 minutes before Mass is to begin. Greet the clergy and ministers when you enter the Sacristy.
- Hang up your coat and find your size Alb and get dressed. Don't forget to wear your cord. The color of the cord should be the same color as the priest and deacons vestments.
- Wash your hands if needed.
- If incense is being used, light the charcoal 10 minutes before Mass
- Check to be sure all candles are lit. If not, light them now.
- Check to see that the wine & water and a ciborium are on the gift table and the Chalice, other ciboria, and the bowl & pitcher and towel are on the Credence table before Mass begins.
- Check to see that the Sacramentary is on the Altar on the stand and that the priest's loose-leaf notebook is on his chair.
- Divide up the roles, (Cross, Candles, Book, Wine & Water, Incense, Etc.) among the servers so that everyone knows their job.
- Five minutes before Mass is to begin proceed to rear of church with cross, candles, incense and boat, (bring matches in case the candles go out on the way to the back of Church).
- Maintain quiet in sacristy and at the back of church.

IN PROCESSION

1. Line up at rear of church in this order:
 - Incense bearer with boat, if used
 - Cross
 - Candles
 - Deacon with Book of Gospels, if used
 - Altar Servers
 - Eucharistic Ministers
 - Concelebrants, if present
 - Celebrant/Presider and Deacon

2. When people begin to sing, proceed **slowly** down the aisle to the sanctuary. Stay together and in line.

DURING MASS

1. At the Altar proceed to seats at the left side of sanctuary or else to the seats next to the priest if directed to do so. You are to remain standing until after the Opening Prayer.
2. If you are standing in front of the Altar next to the priest, remember to genuflect when he bows at the Altar, both at the beginning and the end of Mass.
3. One server should come over and stand in front of the priest to hold the loose-leaf notebook for him as soon as he begins the Mass.
4. For the Penitential Rite, the servers move over and stands in front of the deacon and then moves back in front of the priest.
5. At the Gloria, when we say, "**For you alone are the Holy One,**" or if there is no Gloria, (Lent & Advent) when the celebrant says, "**Let us pray,**" the Altar server brings and holds the notebook for the celebrant for the Opening Prayer. After the Opening Prayer, bow to the Celebrant and go back to your chair.
6. After the Prayers of Intercession, the server brings the chalice, ciboria, and the Sacramentary from the credence table and places them on the altar and/or presents them to the deacon. Bow before leaving the altar.
7. Go to the front of the sanctuary to the altar rail with the priest and deacon to receive the gifts.
8. On some occasions, we will direct two servers, with candles, to go the rear of the church **to lead** the gift bearers to the sanctuary. Sometimes we may ask you to go without the candles and sometimes we will go with the cross as well as candles.
9. Two servers bring the wine and water to the credence table, remove the stoppers and come immediately back up to the altar with the cruets. Do not wait. One hand on heart while holding the cruet. Hold the cruets with the handle pointed away from you. Do not put cruets on the Altar or lean on the Altar. Bow together before leaving altar.

10. If incense is used, the server brings the incense and boat to the Priest/deacon and stands to the side of the deacon. The priest will walk around the Altar incensing as they go then he will give the incense to the deacon to incense clergy and people.
11. As soon as the priest has finished incensing, another server brings the basin and pitcher to wash the priest's hands. Another server brings a towel, **unfolded and opened**, at the same time to the altar immediately. Do not wait. Again, one hand on heart. Bow before leaving altar.
12. Return to seats - no talking, keep hands folded, keep eyes on altar, and respond to all the prayers. Stand when people stand and kneel when people kneel.
13. If there are no kneelers at your seats, kneel on the pads or at the side of the altar during the Eucharistic Prayers until everyone stands to say the "Our Father."
14. At the sign of peace, come first to the celebrant and deacon then share with others in the sanctuary.
15. As soon as chalice is consumed and placed back on the altar, come forward to receive communion from the celebrant or deacon. Then return to kneeler in prayer - Total Quiet.
16. After communion of the people, when the tabernacle door closes and the Priest/deacon consumes the remaining wine in the chalice, bring water for chalice to the Altar. Another server takes the chalice back to the credence table and goes back to his/her seat.
17. When the music stops and the celebrant stands and says, **"let us pray,"** come over to the priest to hold the notebook for the final prayer. After the prayer, bow and return to your chair.
18. After the final blessing and dismissal, servers get the Cross and the two candles and we reverse our steps to go to the front of the altar. If you are holding the cross, candles do not genuflect when the priest does - stay standing. If you are not carrying anything, genuflect when the priest bows. Then turn around and process to the rear of the church.

AFTER MASS

1. When back in the sacristy:
 - a. Put out candles after the last Mass, (Except after the 7, 9 and 10:30 Masses on Sunday).
 - b. Return incense to sacristy.
 - c. Empty bowl and replace tower.
 - d. **Refill cruets with wine and water** and store in refrigerator.
 - e. Hang up your alb and any which may have fallen in the closet.
 - f. Put cords away. Keep your alb neat and clean.

ODDS AND ENDS

The Mass is our most solemn liturgy. Smiling, laughing, or talking on the altar is very distracting to ministers and people.

Practice walking and moving in smooth, slow steps - not fast and jerky motions. This will look more prayerful.

Know all the prayers and say them loud enough to be heard.

It may be helpful to think of the preparation for the Eucharist like preparing for a meal at home:

First you set the table.
Then you place the food on the table.
Then you wash your hands and say a prayer.
Then you eat.
Afterwards, clean the table and dishes.

There are some priests who will want something a little different, get to know what each priest wants or ask before Mass.

Special training for Weddings, Stations of the Cross, funerals and Holy Week will be scheduled separately.

REMEMBER: You are responsible to call another altar server to take your place when you cannot serve your Mass. Help us make sure someone is there to serve. If you can't get a replacement then call or email Deacon Toole. Also, if you are sitting in Church and you see there are no Altar servers or only one server or any missing servers, please come up to help out.