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# Altar Server Handbook

Saints Peter and Paul Parish  
Naperville, Illinois

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## FORWARD

Thank you for answering the call to serve the Lord at His altar! We are delighted that you have committed to this wonderful ministry.

Serving at the altar of the Lord is a privilege and a ministry. When we come together as a community to worship God, we must understand that this is the greatest prayer that we pray as a community in the Church and because this is worship of the Holy Trinity it is to be carried out in the most reverent manner possible. Dress and movement during procession, the mass itself and the recessional are of the utmost importance. When you serve at mass, your focus must be solely on this great privilege; your attention to your duties and your active participation in the mass will help you to be able to do that.

As an altar server you have many duties to carry out to assist the Presider and Deacon (if Present) during mass in order to make this Eucharistic celebration a truly joyous and worshipful prayer. As with any ministry, it is important to be dressed appropriately, to be properly groomed; to arrive early and to understand and carry out the responsibilities and behavior proper to the ministry of an altar server.

These instructions and rubrics are to be followed unless otherwise directed by the Presider or Deacon.

## SUNDAY MASS

### Arrival and Vesting

Make sure that you are groomed and dressed appropriately before arriving. Please follow these dress guidelines.

- Hair must be combed or brushed and worn neatly; long hair should be tied back or braided to avoid hair falling into your face.
- Hands and fingernails are clean.
- Proper attire for boys is black, blue or khaki long pants (Blue Jeans are not acceptable); a white or light colored shirt, a collarless shirt works best with the cassock. Dress shoes, black or brown and dark socks. Gym shoes or sandals are never acceptable. There are a limited number of shoes in the server sacristy that can be worn for mass if you do not have a pair of dark dress shoes.
- Proper attire for girls is black, blue or khaki slacks or skirt are acceptable (Blue Jeans are not acceptable) and white or light colored PLAIN shirts. Dress shoes with a back and a low heel are best on the terrazzo tile and marble floors in the sanctuary. Gym shoes, backless sandals or flip-flops are never acceptable.

You are to arrive in the server sacristy at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled mass you are serving. This is important so that you can help get the sanctuary prepared before mass. You are to enter the server sacristy from the outside door located on Benton Street or you may come through the main body of the church and use the door located next to St. Joseph's altar. Please do not enter or leave the sacristy through the sanctuary.

The very first thing to do is to sign in on the attendance sheet. You will see your name printed on the attendance sheets and you should mark your initials in the box next to your name. If you are substituting for another server, sign your name in the area next to the name of the server for whom

you are substituting. If you are not scheduled to serve or substitute, but have come up to serve from the congregation, sign in in the substitute area and mark the box that says you were not scheduled.



In our parish, the boys' proper vestments are the cassock and surplice and the girls' proper vestment is the alb (see illustrations).

Immediately after signing in, find a cassock and surplice or alb that fits you. Your cassock or alb should be long enough so that the hem touches the tops of your shoes, never shorter or longer. The surplice should be long enough to reach your waist, never shorter or longer.

Pull the alb over your head inserting your arms in the sleeves. Button the top snap and if you are wearing a shirt with a collar, make sure the collar is underneath the neck opening of the alb. The cincture must be worn with the alb and is used to gather the alb at your waist. It can be used to adjust the length of the alb, if necessary, by pulling the material of the alb above the cincture and allowing it to flow over the top of the cincture in a "blousing" fashion. This will shorten the length of an alb that is too long. The cincture should be folded in half and tied around the waist with the ends of the cincture hanging down the left side. Choose a cincture that is long enough to tie, but not too long as to cause you to trip over the ends. High school girls are to wear the GOLD cinctures, all other girls wear WHITE cinctures.



The cassock has snaps from the neck to the hem. Take the cassock from the hanger and put your arms in the sleeves and then snap all of the snaps closed including the top one. Then choose a surplice from a hanger that pull it over your head and place your arms through the sleeves.

**AFTER MASS BE SURE TO HANG THE VESTMENTS BACK IN THE CLOSET AND DO NOT LEAVE THEM LAYING OUT ON A CHAIR OR WORSE YET, ON THE FLOOR. ALL SERVERS SHARE THESE VESTMENTS, PLEASE RESPECT YOUR FELLOW SERVERS AS WELL AS THE PARISHONERS WHO DONATED THE MONEY TO PURCHASE THEM.**

When you are vested, proceed immediately to the priest's sacristy by using the passageway behind the altar.

## **Preparations before Mass**

Light the candles. We always use a candle lighter to light the candles. The candle lighters are located on the side of the grey metal locker next to the sink. They have wooden handles and a long metal neck. There are two types of lighters; one is longer and has a snuffer on it and the other is shorter and has a snuffer. The shorter one is the one to use for normal lighting. If the tall candles near the tabernacle are to be lit, you must use the longer lighter.

Both lighters work the same way, attached to the neck is a container that has oil in it and a wick that is used to light the candles in the sanctuary. You only have to light the wick, there are no other adjustments necessary. **DO NOT PULL THE WICK OUT AND MAKE SURE THE LIGHTER IS HANGING OR STANDING IN AN UPRIGHT FASHION AND NOT LAYING ON ITS SIDE WHEN YOU ARE DONE.**

Use the matches (or butane lighter if present) located on the metal locker. Always close the match box and strike the match away from you on the side of the box. Once you have lit the wick, extinguish the match by blowing it out and placing the used match in the sand in the glass

Bowl on top of the locker. Replace match box on top of the locker. NEVER PLACE THE MATCH BOX ON THE RADIATOR! If you need help to light the lighter do not hesitate to ask someone to assist you!

When the taper is lit proceed to the sanctuary, SLOWLY. If the candle won't light, check to see if the wick of the candle is bent down into the wax, if it is, pull it upright before lighting.

Begin with the candle next to the Ambo. Proceed to the altar and light the candles there on the closest side first. Walk in front of the altar but, for safety reasons, DO NOT genuflect to the tabernacle as you go to the other side to light the other two candles. During Easter Season or when there is to be a baptism during mass or when directed by the Priest or Deacon, you will also light the Paschal Candle which is located near the baptismal font. This candle is very tall so either use the long lighter or ask for assistance.

When finished lighting the candles, you may blow out the flame on the lighter. Return to the sacristy by crossing once again in front of the altar, genuflecting to the tabernacle this time.

Replace the lighter on top of the locker, or stand in the corner for the longer one.

## Offering Gifts

If the gifts to be offered (cruet of wine, cruet of water and ciborium) are still on the table in the sacristy, take them to the back of church and place them on the wooden table behind the last pew next to the main aisle. Ordinarily, this should be done by the server who is not lighting the candles; however, if servers are missing the server lighting the candles must make sure that the gifts are on the table in the back at least ten minutes before mass is scheduled to begin.

When these things are all done, ask the Presider or Deacon if there is anything else to be done. If not, sit or stand quietly until it is time for the procession.

## Procession

During the procession, normally the tallest or oldest of the three servers is the crucifix bearer. However, if there are two girls and one boy, the boy should carry the crucifix and if there are two boys and one girl, the girl should carry it. The other two servers will be candle bearers. The processional candles and holders are the large candleholders on the floor in the priest's sacristy. The candles should be lit when you arrive at the entrance of the church before the procession begins. There is a small box of matches located in the locker that says "for lighting the processional candles" take these to the back of church with you to light the candles but put them back in the locker when you leave after mass.

There is also a set of smaller candle holders that can be used if the larger ones are too difficult to carry or younger or smaller servers, but a matched set has to be used and so use either both large ones or both small ones... do not mix them.

The candles can be rested on the floor while we are waiting for the procession to begin so long as you are aware of the flame. The candle bearers must also be careful to avoid getting too close to the crucifer, so keep yourselves a couple of steps behind him/her.

When you reach the altar do not genuflect, a slight head bow will suffice before going to your places.

The candle bearers bring the candles into the sacristy, place them out of any walk way and extinguish them prior to taking their seats in the sanctuary.

The Presider or Deacon will signal when it is time to go to the back of church for the procession.

At that time one of the servers, who is not the crucifix bearer, should hold the door for the others to exit. Ordinarily, you will walk outside the church and in through the front doors, however if it is raining, snowing or extremely cold check with the Presider or Deacon before moving out of the sacristy. The crucifix should always be held reverently, upright and never down or sideways; never spin the crucifix when standing still. When going through the doorways, be sure to lower the crucifix to avoid hitting the top of it against the door frame by holding it lower. The other servers should open and hold doors for the crucifer and the Presider.

When reaching the back of church, wait to the side of the main aisle until after the announcements are complete so that you are not blocking the aisle as parishioners are arriving. When the announcements are complete, you can assemble in the main aisle with the Crucifix bearer in the center of the aisle and one server on each side of the crucifer, one step behind. The servers flanking the crucifer are to process with hands folded upright with fingertips touching each other pointing upward if candles are not carried in the procession. Hands are always held in this position when standing or kneeling.

The Priest or Deacon will signal when it is time to begin to process to the altar. If the Priest does not signal, you should wait until the entrance hymn begins before starting down the aisle. Walk reverently and slowly with the crucifix held high enough so everyone can see it, but not so high that it becomes top heavy. The crucifer sets the pace of the procession so, if you are the crucifer make sure that you do not rush. A good pace is one step every second. The side servers should never walk ahead of the Crucifix

Upon reaching the sanctuary, the servers stop at the green line on the floor in front of the altar and stand before the altar together. The crucifix bearer remains standing and bows his/her head slowly and reverently and the two flanking servers, genuflect (not bow) to the tabernacle together. Immediately after bowing, the server on the right hand side takes a step back to clear the way for the crucifer and the crucifer moves the crucifix to the holder in the sanctuary (near the entrance to the passageway behind the altar) and the two servers walk together to their chairs to the left of the altar and they remain standing. After placing the crucifix in the holder, the crucifer goes to his/her chair by the kneeler and remains standing.

**Note: At the 6:30AM Sunday Mass and at daily masses, there is no procession down the center aisle. Instead the Priest and servers enter the sanctuary from the sacristy. The first server to enter the sanctuary should ring the bell by the side of the sacristy door, to signal the congregation that mass is beginning.**

## The Mass

Although you are serving at mass, this is also your time to worship the Lord and so you are expected to participate in all prayers, responses and hymns along with the rest of the community. You will find a hymnal on the shelf in your kneeler, use it to praise the Lord in song. Your hands are folded upwards with fingertips touching at any time you are standing or walking through the sanctuary and you are not carrying anything. When you are seated, your hands are to be placed on your knees, palms down, at all times. Sit straight in your chair and listen attentively to all of the readings, etc. Both feet should be flat on the floor and you should not cross your legs nor put your feet on the kneeler.

As the Gloria is being sung, the crucifer should prepare the Sacramentary for the Opening Prayer by opening it to the opening prayer (usually the green ribbon) and carrying it to the Presider in the open position. The proper position to hold the Sacramentary is to have the bottom of the book resting in the open palms of both hands and the top of the Sacramentary leaning against the top of your chest to steady it. The Presider may adjust the level and if he does, simply move the book where he

wants it but always make sure your are steadying the book against your chest or even your head if you are not tall, to be sure the book doesn't shake while Father is reading from it.

When the Priest closes the Sacramentary or dismisses the server, the server reverently returns it to the table and sits in his/her chair to listen to the Word of God.

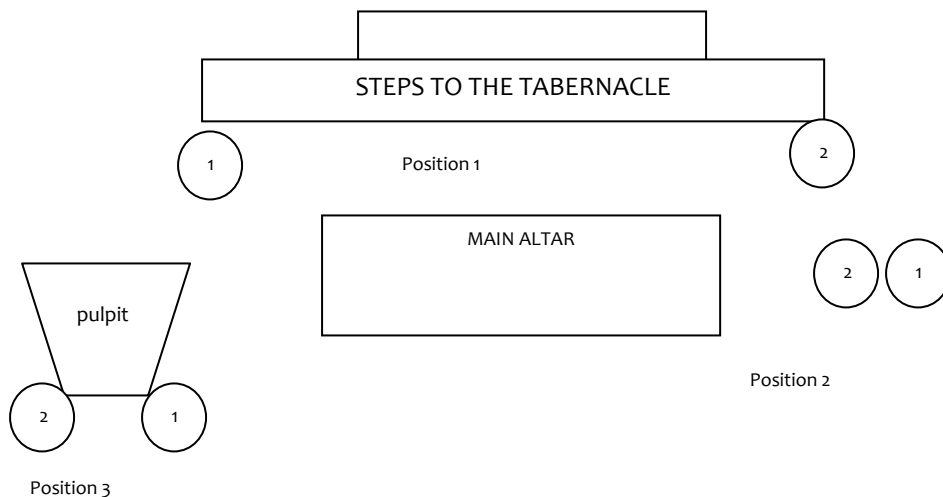
### Gospel procession

The candle bearers should get the candles lit and ready during the second reading. As soon as the second reader is finished, the candle bearers should move out and position themselves at position 1.

**Position 1.** The servers come out with the processional candles and stand, one at each end of the bottom step to the tabernacle (as shown below). The servers should be **facing the congregation** and wait for the deacon or priest to go to the altar and pick up the book of gospels.

**Position 2.** When the deacon or priest holds up the book, the servers should move to position 2. This means that **candle bearer 1 moves across the sanctuary to join candle bearer 2 on the other side of the altar**, and, facing the congregation, they will wait until the deacon or priest comes behind them with the book of gospels and then they will *process*, slowly, in front of the deacon or priest, and *lead him* to the pulpit and get into position 3.

**Position 3.** The candle bearers will process to the pulpit and take the positions on either side of the pulpit **facing each other and holding the candles throughout the reading of the gospel**. When the reading of the gospel is finished and the people respond "praise to you lord jesus christ", the servers will move the candles back to the sacristy, extinguish the flames and go to their places in the sanctuary for the homily.



The procession in can only take place if there are three servers. If there are less than three servers, revert to the former way that we processed in. If there are at least two servers, we should still have the gospel procession and so you would follow the gospel procession instructions.

After the intercessions (petitions) have been read, the two servers sitting together at the left will go to the credence table together and will pick up the chalice and paten, extra ciboria, cups and purificators to bring them to the altar. Reverently approach the altar together, and place the vessels on the altar. If the chalice veil is on the chalice, slip your dominate hand under the veil grasping the stem of the chalice and your other hand should be on top of the burse. The cups,

purificators and other ciboria should be placed on the right hand side of the altar. All of the vessels including the veiled chalice should be placed on the right hand side of the altar. The Sacramentary is placed on the stand on the left side of the altar. All then return to their places unless there are more cups or ciborium on the credence table. In that case, the two servers will go back to the credence table and get the rest of the vessels and bring them together to the altar and after placing them on the altar will reverence the altar once more with a bow before returning together to their chairs.

Take your time to do this; there is no rush and you will have plenty of time to do this before it is time for the reception of the gifts.

## Reception of the gifts and Consecration

When the Presider rises and walks to the steps of the sanctuary to receive the gifts, the two servers will also rise and join him in the center aisle and stand on either side of him, not behind him. If the deacon is present, the deacon stands at the right of the Presider and the server on that side stands next to him. When the Presider receives the gifts from the gift bearers, he will hand the wine cruet to one server and the water cruet to the other (If you are the only server, you will receive both cruets). If the deacon is present, he may receive them first and then hand them to you.

With the Presider, the servers will bow to the gift bearers and then turn around going directly to the right hand side of the altar with the wine and water cruets where they stand to present the cruets for the preparation of the Chalice.

The servers go to the side of the altar removing the stoppers from the cruets, if present, and stand to wait for the Presider or Deacon to take the wine cruet to fill the chalice; **the cruets should always be handed to the Priest or Deacon with the handle turned toward them.** When the chalice is filled, the Presider or Deacon will hand the cruet back to the server and turn to the other server to take the water cruet. When the Presider or Deacon returns the water cruet to the server, both servers make a head bow and turn together and walk to the credence table to get the hand washing bowl and towel for the Presider to wash his hands.

The server with the water cruet should carry the cruet and bowl. The other server should carry the towel. The towel should be carried in this fashion; the towel should be opened completely and held by the corners by the thumb and forefinger. The servers will stand together near the table facing the altar but do not approach the altar until the Presider finishes prayer and turns to face them. At this time, the servers should approach the Presider together. The servers should go to stand close to the Presider and hold the bowl under the Presider's hands, high enough so that he does not have to bend over to wash his hands. Pour a liberal amount of water on the Presider's hands. The Presider will take the towel and dry his hands, and then he will fold it in half to return it to the server. The server should have his/her hands folded, fingertips touching and pointed directed at the Presider with thumbs in a "thumbs up" position. When the Presider places the folded towel over the server's fingers, he/she brings the thumbs down over the folded towel. The servers wait until the Presider bows to them then they make a head bow in return and then take the cruet, bowl and towel back to the credence table. If the Presider does not bow, but simply walks back to the center of the Altar, the servers should still make a head bow and then return to the credence table. Following this, the servers return to their chairs/kneelers.

At the end of the "Sanctus"(Holy, Holy, Holy), kneel down on the kneelers. Always kneel with a straight back with hands folded on top of the kneeler shelf. Be sure to adjust your alb so that it is not over the back or under the toes of your shoes, so that you won't step on the hem when you stand.

The bells are rung a total of seven times. The server who rings the bells will ring the bells (1) at the epiclesis (when the priest places his hands together over the gifts) and then (2) at the Elevation of the

Host, (3) when the host is returned to the altar and (4) when the Presider genuflects (these are three separate and distinct rings) and (5) at the Elevation of the Chalice, (6) when the Chalice is returned to the altar and (7) when the Presider genuflects. (The bells are rung by twisting your wrist back and forth two or three times) A reminder is posted on your kneeler.

All servers remain in the kneeling position until the Great Amen is sung, then stand with the community.

## Communion

When the extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist come up to receive communion, the servers should rise and stand next to the ministers to receive communion. If you do not wish to receive the Precious Blood, return to your kneeler to say your prayer of thanksgiving. If you do wish to receive the Precious Blood, remain in your position with the ministers until you have received from the cup, then return to your kneeler.

After the Priest, Deacon and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist have begun to distribute communion, one of the servers should rise and bring the water cruet to the altar, placing it near the chalice. The Crucifer should bring the Sacramentary from the holder on the Altar back to the table by his/her kneeler. All should return to the kneeling position.

When the distribution of communion is completed, the Presider or the Deacon or both will return to the altar to purify the vessels (only the Presider and/or Deacon purify the vessels) The Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist will wait to receive the purified vessels and will take them into the sacristy to wash them. After the Presider/Deacon has completed purifying the chalice and paten, he will place the purificators over the chalice and the paten on top of the chalice and the pall on top of the paten. Then he will fold the Corporals and place them in the burse, cover the chalice with the veil and place the burse on top. When this is finished, the servers should rise from their kneelers and take the water cruet and the chalice/paten back to the credence table. The only thing that should be left on the Altar is the book holder. If there is anything else on the altar, remove it.

## Final Prayer and Recession

When the Presider rises and says "Let us pray", the crucifer brings the Sacramentary to him and holds it in the same fashion as at the opening prayer. The candle bearers go to the sanctuary and light the processional candles. Then stand with the lit candles next to the alcove leading to the priests' sacristy and wait for the crucifer to begin to exit.

When the Presider closes the Sacramentary, the server returns the book to the table and retrieves the crucifix from the holder then moves reverently out of the sanctuary and to the center aisle. The candle bearers follow the crucifer and stand with him/her facing the altar until the Presider and Deacon genuflect before turning around and moving out of the church.

Note: If there are not enough servers to have candles (need two servers + the Crucifer), the server who is NOT the crucifer genuflects at the same time as the priest and deacon. The crucifix bearer does not genuflect, but may perform a head bow. Some Priests may not genuflect and will bow instead. If this occurs, the servers should still genuflect when the Priest bows.

All three servers turn and begin the procession reverently and slowly down the center aisle and out of the church

## After Mass

When the servers reach the back of church, they immediately return to the priest's sacristy, ideally from the outside of church, however, if the weather is bad, you may return to the sacristy from the side aisle closest to the sacristy, but you will have to be courteous to those who are

leaving the pews and allow them access to the doors.

In the sacristy the crucifix is returned to its holder and two servers should extinguish all of the candles. Never blow the candles out. Candles should be extinguished using the snuffers on the longer candle lighters. The bell of the snuffer should only be placed down over the flame until the flame goes out (you can tell when you no longer see light under the snuffer or you see the smoke. **DO NOT PRESS THE SNUFFER DOWN ON TOP OF THE CANDLE** because this will bend the wick into the hot wax and make it difficult to light.

Put the snuffer away and return to the server's sacristy, remove your vestments and hang them up in the closet with the cincture hung up on the hook outside the closet.

## Chapel Mass

Serving mass in the chapel differs from serving in the church.

There are only two servers in the chapel and it is important they work as a team. As always, arrive 15 minutes before masses are scheduled to begin. Light the altar candles and the candle next to the ambo before mass. There is always a cross bearer when processing in from the back. In the chapel the wooden cross (without Jesus) is found in the holder to the left of the main doors of the chapel. The cross bearer is always on the left during the procession into mass.

You will process into the chapel down the main aisle with the altar servers before the priest. When reaching the altar, server without the cross, bows (a low sweeping bow; not just bowing your head) to the altar at 9:30 mass **but genuflect at the 11:00 mass because the Blessed Sacrament will be in the tabernacle at this mass.** The server without the cross goes to right of altar; the server who goes to the left puts the cross in the stand and then stands next to the other server in front of the padded bench on either side of the cross on the wall with hands folded in the upright position.

The Presider may begin mass from the chair or standing at the altar. Some Presiders may have the sacramentary on the altar all through mass, if this is so, the priest will pray from the altar and there is no need for the server to hold the sacramentary. If the sacramentary is on the table next to the Presider, then when he intones "Let Us Pray", walk to the table and bring Sacramentary to hold before him. Afterward, return the Sacramentary to the table next to the priest.

During the readings you should be seated on the bench with hands on your knees, palms down.

After the petitions, rise at the same time and if one server brings the Sacramentary if on the table by the priest then the other brings the chalice. If the Sacramentary is already on the altar, bring the chalice and cups from the credence table. The Sacramentary goes on the left while the chalice goes on the right side, and the cups go on the right corner of the corporal. Step back, bow, return to credence table for remaining cups and purificators. Step back, bow and sit down.

At the offertory, stand when the priest stands and go before the altar on either side of priest to receive gifts. Stand next to not behind the priest. The Presider will give one server the wine while the other receives the water. The Presider or Deacon will take the ciborium. The Presider, Deacon and servers bow to the gift bearers. All turn to face altar, the servers go to the left, and the Presider and Deacon to the right.

The servers go to the side of the altar removing the stoppers from the cruets, if present, and

stand to wait for the Presider or Deacon to take the wine cruet to fill the chalice; the cruets should be handed to the Priest or Deacon with the handle turned toward them. When the chalice is filled, the Presider or Deacon will hand the cruet back to the server and turn to the other server to take the water cruet. When the Presider or Deacon returns the water cruet to the server, both servers make a head bow and turn together and walk to the credence table to get the hand washing bowl and towel for the Presider to wash his hands.

The server with the water cruet should carry the cruet and bowl. The other server should carry the towel. The towel should be carried in this fashion; the towel should be completely opened completely and held by the corners by the thumb and forefinger.

The servers will stand together near the table facing the altar but do not approach the altar until the Presider finishes prayer and turns to face them. At this time, the servers should approach the Presider together. The server should hold the bowl under the Presider's hands, high enough so that he does not have to bend over to wash his hands. Pour a liberal amount of water on the Presider's hands. The Presider will take the towel and dry his hands, then he will fold it in half to return it to the server. The server should have his/her hands folded, fingertips touching and pointed directed at the Presider with thumbs in a "thumbs up" position. When the Presider places the folded towel over the server's fingers, he/she brings the thumbs down over the folded towel. The servers wait until the Presider bows to them then they make a head bow in return and then take the cruet, bowl and towel back to the credence table. If the Presider does not bow, but simply walks back to the center of the Altar, the servers should still make a head bow and then return to the credence table. Following this, the servers return to the bench.

Everything is now the same as in the church. Even though the congregation remains standing during the consecration, the servers kneel after the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) and remain kneeling until after the Great Amen. The bells should be rung in the same fashion as in the church.

If the servers are not receiving communion they should remain seated. If they are receiving they should stand in front of the bench in a line that will be formed by the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. Note: You do not have to receive the precious blood; simply sit down after receiving the precious body. After receiving communion wait until all the Eucharistic Ministers have received and then return to kneel and pray your thanksgiving. While Eucharist is being distributed, bring the water cruet to the altar. As with the church, when all of the vessels have been purified and the Presider has finished clearing the altar the servers should remove the water cruet from the altar (and Chalice if one of the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist has not done so. After clearing the altar return to sit by the cross (different from serving in church where you are kneeling until the tabernacle is closed).

After the final blessing and the announcement of the final song, the cross bearer retrieves the cross from the stand, and the two servers go into the middle of the aisle, first chair and face the altar. The Presider and Deacon will kiss the altar and go in front of the servers. The Presider and Deacon and non-cross bearing server genuflect turn and process out.

## Daily Mass

Serving at daily mass is generally the same as Sunday mass in most ways. The following are the differences in the daily mass:

- Only two servers are assigned to daily mass

- There is no offertory procession the ciboria and cups are all on the credence table outside of the sacristy and not in the back of the church. There is no need to take the gifts to the back of church at daily mass.
- Procession at daily mass begins from the sacristy with no cross bearer. The servers process in together in front of the priest. The first server rings the sacristy bell. The server on the left stops at the left corner of the altar while the server on the right goes to the right side of the priest and all genuflect to the tabernacle at the same time. Both servers go to their places as described in Sunday mass.

After final blessing, both servers go in front of the altar stepping back far enough so the Presider can go to the center of the Altar in front of them. The priest kisses the altar and goes to stand in the middle of the two servers. All genuflect, turn left, and process to the sacristy with the servers walking together in front followed by the lector and priest. These are the exceptions for serving at daily mass.

## Weddings and Funerals

Serving at weddings and funerals differs from Sunday or Daily mass because there are special things to be done and it is not always done the same way by all priests. In this section we will concentrate on only the differences, the rest of the mass parts are mostly the same as daily mass.

The most important thing to remember is to arrive for a funeral or wedding at least 20 minutes before mass is scheduled to begin. It is important because the priest will need to give you any special instructions.

Before mass begins, light the altar and pulpit candles; do not light the unity candles. Check to make sure the small tray with a limited votive candle, bowl of sand and 2 lighting sticks are ready on communion rail by Unity candle. The Unity candles is lit by the mothers of the bride and groom before the start of the wedding.

If a mass, be prepared to go with priest to accept the gifts of bread and wine brought up during offertory which will be brought up by members of the congregation.

Usually the holy water pot and sprinkler are in the front of altar on the floor just to the left of the Presider as he faces the congregation. The glass dish with a cloth on it (to hold the rings) is on the corner of the altar near the priest. They need to have those available at the exchange of rings. At the blessing of the rings the servers hold the tray with the rings and the holy water pot for the priest.

Sometimes we have visiting priests so the server needs to know where things are on the altar so he can perform his/her duties and assist the Presider.

The servers must be attentive to the Presider presiding in order to follow his directions. The main thing to be ready for is the exchange of marriage vows after the homily. Typically the Presider will stand in front of the man and woman. The servers can stand on either side of him; one will usually hold the book and one will hold the holy water for blessings the rings.

Funerals -The beginning and end are different. At the beginning one server holds the holy water for the priest to sprinkle the casket, the other holds the cross; the procession begins just inside the front doors of the church. After going up towards the altar, the water can be put on the communion rail or credence table. After communion, after the post-communion prayer, the server brings the censer to the Presider to incense the casket. When finished, put the incense back and retrieve the holy water.

# Glossary

Alb	The white garment worn by the priest and deacon under their vestments and also worn by the servers. Priest and Deacon's albs are in the closet in the priest's sacristy. The server's albs are in the closet in the server's sacristy.
Ambo	The reading stand that is used to proclaim the readings and Gospel in the church and the chapel
Candle Lighter	The instrument used to light the candles in the sanctuary. There are two types of lighters. A longer one that telescopes to light the taller candles and those that flank the Tabernacle. These lighters also have the candle snuffers on them and are used to extinguish the candles at the end of mass. The shorter version of the lighters is used to light the altar and Pulpit (ambo) candles. The long candle lighters hang on the side of the grey locker in the priest's sacristy. The shorter ones are found on top of the locker.
Censer	The vessel used to burn incense. Charcoal is placed in the bottom of this vessel and ignited. The grains of incense lay atop of the charcoal and burn giving off the smoke and aroma of the incense. The censer is found in the grey locker along with the Incense and the boat.
Chalice	The chalice is the vessel used by the priest to hold the wine that is consecrated and becomes the blood of our Lord. Each priest has his own chalice. The priest's chalices are stored in the vault in the priest's sacristy. On the shelf of the vault each chalice for the priests at SSPP are marked. There is also one marked for the use of visiting priests.
Chalice Veil and Burse	The cloth in appropriate liturgical color that is laid over and covers the chalice and the matching pocket that stores the corporal. The proper manner in which to carry the covered chalice to the altar is to slip your hand under the veil and grasp the stem of the chalice with the dominant hand, holding the burse with the other hand.
Ciborium	A Ciborium is the vessel (dish) used to hold communion hosts for distribution to the faithful.
Ciboria	More than one ciborium. Our ciboria are stored in the vault in the priest's sacristy. Access to the vault is limited.
Cincture	The white rope that is used to hold the alb to the waist. These are found on the hook outside the closet in the server's sacristy.
Corporal	The cloths that are spread on the altar, in front of the Tabernacle and any other place where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. The corporal is used to contain any particles of the body of Christ that may fall from the ciboria or paten and any precious blood that may be spilled. The corporals are located on the right hand side of the second drawer of the main cabinet in the priest's sacristy. The space in the drawer with the corporal is clearly marked.
Crucifix	A cross with the body (corpus) of Jesus upon it. The processional crucifix is found in the priest's sacristy before mass; is placed in the holder on the right of the altar during mass; and placed back in the priest's sacristy after mass.

Cruets	The small glass bottles that hold the water and wine that are brought to the altar during the Offertory. The cruets filled with water and wine are located in the small refrigerator in the priest's sacristy. Extra ones may be found in the closet next to the refrigerator.
Cup	This is the vessel that holds the wine which becomes the sacred blood of our Lord from which the faithful receive. The cups are stored in the vault, usually on a round tray.
Holy Water Pot and Sprinkler	The vessel used to hold Holy Water for blessing the people and/or articles. The sprinkler is dipped into the water and used by the priest or deacon to sprinkle the people or articles. The Holy Water pot is found in the grey locker. The sprinkler should be found inside the pot.
Humeral Veil	The veil used by the priest or deacon to transport the Blessed Sacrament from the Tabernacle to the Monstrance for Exposition or in procession. The veil is a long piece of material that rests over the shoulders and back of the priest or deacon. The veil is found in the drawer marked "velum" on the left hand side of the cabinet in the priest's sacristy. The server holds the veil with fingers near the clasps and stands behind and lays the veil across the shoulders of the priest or deacon making sure the priest or deacon has taken hold of the clasps before releasing it.
Incense Boat	The vessel used to hold the incense that is to be put into the censer. The boat is also in the grey locker.
Paschal Candle	The very large candle that is introduced on the vigil of Easter. It is very ornate and is marked with the year. The Paschal candle is lit at all masses during the Easter season and during sacraments such as baptisms, funerals and confirmation. The Paschal candle is in its own stand in the sanctuary near the baptismal font.
Paten	A small flat dish used to hold the large host that the priest consecrates at mass. The paten is usually found on top of the priest's chalice in the vault.
Purificators	Small white cloths marked with a red cross and folded in a rectangular manner that are used to dry the sacred vessels and to wipe the cup after use. These linens are specially laundered. The purificators are stored in the small top drawer on the left hand side of the main cabinet in the Priest's sacristy. The drawer with the purificators is clearly marked.

Sanctuary Lamps	Sanctuary lamps or candles are found near the Tabernacle and are lit to signify that the Blessed Sacrament is in the Tabernacle. Our lamps are the candles held by the two angels located on either side of the Tabernacle.
Stole	The garment worn by the priest and deacon over the alb and under the outer vestments. The stoles come in the liturgical colors. Stoles are found in the closet of the priest's sacristy or in the drawers in the cabinet.
Tabernacle	The holding place for the Blessed Sacrament. The Tabernacle in church is located behind the altar.
Towel	A cloth used for drying the priest's hands after he washes them at mass. The towels are located on the left hand side of the second drawer of the main cabinet in the priest's sacristy. The space in the drawer with the towels is clearly marked.
Wireless Microphone	The microphone worn by the priest or deacon that allows him to move about the church when speaking. The microphone is stored in the top small drawer on the right side of the cabinet in the priest's sacristy.

## Policy

**Dress:** Any server who arrives to serve mass without the appropriate dress, will not be allowed to serve mass and it will be counted as an unexcused absence

**Attendance:** Serving on the altar is a privilege and requires dependability; therefore, any altar server who has been absent 3 times during a scheduled quarter, without discussing with Deacon Ron, will automatically be taken off the next schedule for three months. Any recurrence will result in permanent removal from the ministry.

**Late Arrival:** At ten minutes before the mass is scheduled to begin, we will ask for any servers in the congregation to fill in, if we are missing servers. Any scheduled altar server who arrives after that time should remain in the congregation to attend mass but should not expect to serve. If you are late and have to be replaced, it will count as an unexcused absence.

**Weekday Masses:** Servers must serve some masses during the week as well as on the weekends. Servers will be scheduled to serve throughout the week at the 6:45AM, 8:00AM and 5:15PM masses. During the months that school is in session, servers who attend the public schools will not be assigned to the 8:00AM mass. All masses are equally important so missing a scheduled weekday mass will be counted the same as missing a Sunday schedule.

**Schedule:** When providing information for the quarterly schedule, carefully review your availability and if you even only have a possible conflict, list that date as one where you cannot serve. Then, each time a new schedule is received, review it immediately to verify the scheduled dates. Any dates appearing on the schedule for which a server is unable to keep must be submitted to Deacon Ron immediately via e-mail, phone call or note. However, it is still the server's responsibility to arrange for a substitute when he or she is unable to serve on those dates for which they are scheduled.

Substitutes: Each server is responsible to find a substitute if they are going to be absent for a scheduled mass.

Weddings: In order to serve at a wedding, the server must be on the schedule for one year with no unexcused absences. Weddings will be assigned according to seniority with older servers with perfect attendances assigned first followed by younger servers with perfect attendance. If a wedding is missed without obtaining a substitute, the server will be removed from the wedding schedule. In most cases only weddings that are being celebrated with a mass will have servers assigned.

Funerals: Due to the nature of funerals, servers will be called to serve with relatively short notice (one to two days). The mission of this ministry is to serve the parish's needs and serving at funerals is one of those needs. Servers attending SSPP school will be called for weekday funerals during the school year and servers attending public school will be called for funerals on Saturdays and weekday funerals during school breaks. Although it is understood that there may be reasons for not being able to serve at a funeral when asked, declining this need on a regular basis is not an option. Servers will be called to serve funerals after one year of experience and having attended a training session.