

Christ the King Catholic Church

Altar Server Training Guide



ALTAR SERVER'S PRAYER

Loving Father, Creator of the universe, you call your people to worship, to be with you and each other at Mass. Help me, for you have called me also. Keep me prayerful and alert. Help me to help others in prayer. Help me remember that as I serve the priest, I am also serving you. Thank you for the trust you've placed in me. Keep me true to that trust. I make my prayer in Jesus' name, who is with us in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thank you for being an Altar Server at Christ the King Catholic Church. Assisting at the Altar of God is a true privilege. This training manual will hopefully help you be more comfortable with the procedures of your service to God and our Parish.

DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

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“Through Baptism we put on Christ and become members of his Body. We are initiated into the Christian community and called to a holiness of life in the world befitting disciples of Jesus. But through all three Sacraments of Initiation we are called to something more: to embrace Christ’s mission of salvation. Baptism initiates all into the one priesthood of Christ, giving each of the baptized, in different ways, a share in his priestly, prophetic, and kingly work. And so every one of the baptized, confirmed in faith through the gifts of God’s Spirit according to his or her calling, is incorporated into the fullness of Christ’s mission to celebrate, proclaim and serve the reign of God.”

(Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, USCCB, 2005)

Dear Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,

As Bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord, I take this opportunity to thank you for fulfilling a much needed liturgical role for your faith community. It is a blessing for me to be able to work side-by-side with liturgical ministers who so generously desire to serve the Lord and His people. I encourage you to continue growing in your formation and your knowledge of the Eucharist. Participate in every opportunity presented to deepen your understanding of the ministry to which you have been called. Search out the avenues that will lead you even closer to the Lord through the Eucharist.

As you collaborate with the Church’s ordained ministers, may you be energized each and every time you gather in community and may you effectively reach out to those who thirst for the living God. Know that you will be in my prayers as you serve the Church and that you can count on my blessings always.

I whole-heartedly believe that the entire Diocese of Gaylord is enriched by your service as a liturgical minister. May Christ, the Bread of Life and the Cup of Eternal Salvation, reward you for your dedicated service.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda
Bishop of Gaylord
www.dioceseofgaylord.org
Fax: 989-705-3589

Dear CTK Altar Server,

For centuries, young people like you have been an integral part of the Mass. As an altar server, you'll sometimes have to rise early in the morning, so a good night's rest is important. Your duties as an altar server will involve everything from assisting the priest with his vestments, to lighting candles, carrying the books used at Mass, handling incense, and saying prayers.

Your most important role is that of prayer leader. Many people think of prayer as a one way conversation with God, but it is actually a two-way conversation-one that requires active listening on the part of those offering prayers if they are to receive the answers they seek.

As an altar server, you will help them listen. Nothing you do will be a distraction to those who are trying so hard to hear. You will help the service flow smoothly so that the congregation can concentrate on all the wonderful sounds surrounding them: the music, the priest's prayers, their own prayers, and the words of Scripture that are read aloud. With your help, their time of worship will be more meaningful and more deeply felt.

Responding is another essential element of prayer. At Mass, the congregation responds through prayer and song, giving praise and thanks to God for all the great things He has done. Unless the task you are performing at the moment makes it impossible, you will be responding along with everyone else, praying and singing whenever it is appropriate. When people see you participating so actively in the Mass, they will feel more comfortable about joining in themselves. As you can see, you have an important leadership role in the celebration of the Mass.

Thank you for your gift to our parish. You are truly a servant of God.

Qualifications:

- The person who serves in this ministry is to be a fully initiated Roman Catholic in good standing who practices his or her faith at all times and mature enough to carry out the duties assigned. This person shall be an active parishioner and be in the 4th Grade.
- He or she must also be able to steadily hold the large books while prayers are being proclaimed by the celebrant.
- Be mature enough to be prayerful and be willing to continue to grow in their spiritual formation and if a minor, have the full support of parents in fulfilling the duties called for.
- A server must respond, audibly, to all parts of the Mass, be able to fully participate in Liturgy: attentive to the Word of God, the sharing of Holy Communion, and in the mission of the Church, while being attentive to the needs of the celebrant.
- Be willing to receive proper formation before beginning to function as an altar server. A server should know the parts of the Mass and their meaning, the various objects used in the liturgy (their names and use), and the various functions of the server during the Mass and other liturgical celebrations.
- Be able to maintain a prayerful posture throughout the Mass, and dress appropriately: Clean clothes, combed hair, and practice good hygiene.

Duties:

- Check the Altar Server schedule ahead of time to make sure of when you are scheduled to serve.
- Arrive for Mass 10 minutes early and check in to see if there are any additional duties in which you may need to assist.
- If you are unable to serve at a mass in which you are scheduled, attempt to find a replacement. After a reasonable effort has been made to find a replacement notify Mark Tafelsky - 938-9214 Ext#25 as soon as possible so that another may serve in your place.
- Have the candles lit and the processional cross ready before Mass begins
- Pay attention and be alert to the actions and needs of the Celebrant. Always be attentive to his needs throughout the entire celebration.
- Always be respectful of the Altar, Celebrant, other Liturgical Ministers and the Assembly. Respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation. Join in singing the hymns and other chants of the liturgy.
- When seated, legs Side-by-Side, NOT crossed. Hands resting in Lap preferably crossed.

Dress Code

Our student dress code, promotes reverence towards God, along with modesty and dignity of the human body.

- **SKIRTS**

Young ladies may wear Skirts or Dresses, NO Mini Skirts, Skirt hemlines should be within two inches of your Kneecap. Colors should be Neutral/Soft. No Bright or Flouescent Colors.

- **PANTS**

Young men and ladies may wear full length pants, Shorts are not appropriate. Colors should be Neutral/Soft. No Bright or Flouescent Colors.

- **SHIRTS**

Button & Polo-Shirts. Young men and ladies may wear either shirt with short-, long- or 3/4-length sleeves, NO Sleeveless. Patterns and Stripes should be avoided as they show through the "Alb." T-Shirts are discouraged, but if worn colors should be Neutral/Soft. No Bright or Flouescent.

- **SHOES**

Dress Shoes Preferred, Solid Color Tennis Shoes allowed if Clean and Soft/Neutral Color, No Sandles/Flipflops, all shoes should have a closed heal. Socks must be worn.

- **Jewelry**

No rings, no earrings, no bracelets, if worn, necklaces should be covered by "Alb". Either leave at home, or put in your pocket before Mass. Watches are OK.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Tights must be neutral (skin) color, navy or white/off-white
- Socks must be of a neutral, solid color
- No tattoos may be visible
- Hair must be neat, clean and of natural tones;
- Pants must be worn at the waist
- No skin is to show at the midsection regardless

Definitions

1. The main **areas of the church** with which you should be concerned:
 - a. The **sanctuary** is the area in the center and toward the front of the church where the altar, the ambo, and the priest's and deacon's chairs are located.
 - b. The **sacristy** is the room where the priest, deacon and altar servers vest and prepare for Mass. Many of the items used in the celebration of the Mass are stored there.
2. Special **books** that are used during the celebration:
 - a. The **Lectionary** is the large book containing the Bible readings. There may be a separate Book of the Gospels, called the **evangelary**.
 - b. The **Roman Missal** is the large book used by the priest when standing at his chair and at the altar during Mass. (The former name for this book was the **Sacramentary**.)
 - c. Other books may be used too in the sanctuary, including a hymnal, a book containing general intercessions, ritual books for the various sacraments, and a book of announcements.
3. Special **vessels** used in Mass:
 - a. The **chalice** is the cup that holds the wine for consecration and communion.
 - b. The **paten** is a plate/bowl that holds the breads for consecration and communion.
 - c. The **ciborium** is a special vessel used to hold the breads for communion of the people. It has a lid or cover.
 - d. The **cruet** is the small jar that contains the water to be used at Mass. Cruets are usually made of glass or ceramic, with a handle.
 - e. The **decanter** is a large jar that contains the wine to be used at Mass. A decanter is usually made of glass or ceramic.
 - f. **Metal Water Pitcher & Bowl**, used to wash Father's Hand's.
4. The **vestments** and **linens** used in Mass:
 - a. The **alb** is a long white robe worn by the priest, and (in some parishes) by other ministers too, including altar servers.
 - b. The **cincture** is a rope or cord worn around the waist over the alb,

- c. The **corporal** is a white cloth that is spread upon the altar during Mass to hold the chalice, paten and ciboria.
 - d. The **purificator** is a white linen cloth which the priest or deacon used to wipe out the chalice during Mass.
 - e. The **finger towel**, or hand towel, is a cloth napkin used to dry the priest's hands.
5. The following **furniture** items may be found in the sanctuary:
- a. The **Presiders chair** is the chair from which the priest presides during the liturgy of the word and during the concluding prayers of the Mass.
 - b. The **lecturn** is a stand from which General Announcements are made to the congregation. The stand used for the Scripture Readings and the Homily is called the **pulpit** or an **ambo**.
 - c. The **altar** is the holy table from which the priest presides over the liturgy of the Eucharist. It is covered with an altar cloth.
 - d. The **credence table** is another name for the side table in the sanctuary where the wine and water cruets, communion patens, etc., are kept during Mass when they are not being used.
6. Some other items with which to be concerned:
- a. The **ambry** is the cabinet that holds the holy oils, usually near the font.
 - b. The **tabernacle** is the large, ornate safe in which consecrated Eucharistic Bread is kept for the communion of the sick and for adoration by the people outside of Mass.
 - c. The **censer** (or **thurible**) is a metal container on a chain in which incense is burned on a piece of charcoal.
 - d. The **incense boat** is a covered container, with a spoon, for the incense that will be burned in the censer.
 - e. The holy water sprinkler (or **aspergill**) is a device, usually a metal stick or the branch from a bush, used by the priest to sprinkle holy water on the people or objects that he blesses.
 - f. The **hosts** is another term for the breads that are consecrated at Mass for the communion of the priest and the people. Many parishes continue to follow the practice of having a large host for the priest and small individual hosts for the people.
 - g. **Chrism** is the holy oil used to anoint people in baptism, confirmation and ordination. It is made from olive oil and a special perfume. The chrism is kept in the ambry.
 - h. The **monstrance** is a large, standing vessel used to show people the holy bread that is the body of Christ. The **lunette** is a small glass container that holds the host and is put inside the monstrance.

Altar Server Instructions

Preparation / Procession

- Arrive at least 10 minutes before Mass in case of any special instructions.
- Be properly dressed for Mass. Even though you are wearing an alb, dress shoes should be the choice of footwear.
- Put on the proper sized alb; the bottom of the alb without the rope should just barely touch the top of your shoes.
- After you are vested, and If the Deacon is celebrating Mass with us, insure his chair is next to the Presiders chair.
- Insure there are Three Worship Aids on the Altar Server Chairs at the Altar.
- Light the candles on both sides of the Altar and Ambo.
- 1-Server, Cross Bearer Only; 2-Servers, Cross Bearer and Candle on the Altar side of the Ambo; 3-Servers, Cross Bearer and both candles from the Ambo. Return to the rear of the church with the appropriate amount determined by the number of servers.
- When the priest is ready, if there are three servers, line up in a triangle pattern, otherwise single file. In front of Lecturer, Deacon and Father.
- Walk at a slow, but steady pace. Take your time and do not rush.
- When you reach the end of the aisle, candle bearers go left staying on carpet and stop in front of Ambo and candle holder, cross bearer goes to right, also remaining on carpet and stops in front of Presiders chair.
- Once Father steps up onto the Altar, the cross-bearer places the processional cross in the stand, being careful to have Jesus facing forward, then take a standing position at your chair. At the same time, candle bears place candles next to Ambo, and then going behind wall at rear of Altar, take a standing position in front of your chair/s. All Servers pick up your worship aid and begin active participation in the Mass.
- When the last refrain of the "Gloria" starts, bring the "Roman Missal" to father, hold the Missal up at Fathers "chest height." You should be in Position, in front of Father before he say's "Let us Pray" at the end of the Gloria.
- Do not sit down until all servers are at chairs. Sit down together.

Liturgy of the Word

- Normally there are no duties during this portion of the Mass unless a Baptism is taking place. In this instance just follow the directions Father gives you before and during Mass.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- After the petitions, and the collection begins, Place the Roman Missal on the left-side of Altar (left when facing congregation), Place the Chalice and other Wine Vessel's in a neatly spaced row on the Altar. Return to your seats, once again sitting together.
- When the father rises to get the gifts, all three servers go down on each side of father to receive the gifts, If you are handed the collection Basket, place it at the front of the Altar, and then position yourself next to the credence table with the cruet of water. If,

you are handed the ciborium with bread or the decanter with wine, immediately place them up on the Altar with the ciborium at the center and the decanter to the right, unless the deacon is present, then present the bread and wine to him once he is positioned behind the altar, Then take a position next to the Credence table in a neat line. **** Note **** with less than 3 servers, please insure all gifts are properly placed before going to the credence table.

- When Father or the Deacon begin their prayers, the server with the Cruet of water should step up to the edge of the final altar step, when Father or the Deacon turns towards you, hand him the Cruet of water. Do not step up unless father/deacon is not moving towards you. **** When father/Deacon empties decanter of wine, be prepared to take empty vessel and place back on credence table.**
- After the cruet is given back to you, go back to the side table. The other two servers pick up the water, the bowl and the towel. Walk together to the final step of the altar for the washing of the hands. After the priest washes his hands, you return the water, bowl, and towel to the side altar and go back to your seats, but remain standing.
- After we sing the Holy, Holy, Holy... you kneel in front of your chair using a kneeler, and remain there until the Great Amen, when you stand.
- During the Sign of Peace, participate with your fellow servers, father and deacon if they choose and with the Eucharistic Ministers as they come up.
- Line up next to the Altar towards the rear to receive communion.
- After receiving communion, everybody except cross bearer return to a kneeling position, the cross bearer remains in place until Father and the EM's leave the Altar to distribute communion and then removes the Roman Missal from the Altar and returns to a kneeling position until Father takes his seat after communion.

Closing Rites

- After communion, when the priest says, "Let us pray..." the cross-bearer brings the Roman Missal to the priest. And then when he is finished, put it back on the side table. And return to your seat, but remain standing.
 - Once the final Prayers are completed and Father begins to move from the Altar down to the carpet, the cross bearer retrieves the cross and all three servers meet in the center aisle, leaving room for the priest and deacon (without the candles).
 - Bow your heads with Father/Deacon, turn to face the rear of the church when Father turns, cross bearer immediately begins to slowly lead the procession out followed by any remaining servers and finally Father at the rear.
 - After the singing stops, please insure the candles are extinguished.
 - Please hang Alb's back on proper hanger and location in Sacristy.
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- **Thank you for serving at the altar!**