



# St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston — Houston, Texas

Established 1978



## Altar Server Guide





## **ABOUT THE ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY**

It is a great honor and privilege to serve at the Altar of our Lord and therefore your participation as an Altar Server is special.

When you serve the priests and deacons, you serve the people of God, and above all, you serve Christ. As an Altar Server, you are involved in the holiest and most sacred event in our tradition of Catholic worship.

Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed to so closely play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist.

During the Mass, our Savior becomes truly present on the altar. It is a great mystery, but it lives at the core of our faith. It is important that you, as an Altar Server, be attentive and sensitive to the presence of God while performing your ministry around the altar.

Servers must remember that everything that they do is for the Glory of God.

As an Altar Server, you will do things that others will never do. You will learn things that others will never know. You will see the Mass in ways that others may never see it. You will do it all for the Honor and Glory of God.

Accordingly, Altar Servers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with the utmost dignity and reverence.

St. Matthias has both boys and girls as Altar Servers, who start after their first communion and continue for as long as we can keep them. All children of good faith are welcome and those who think they may desire to serve are encouraged to do so.



## REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING AN ALTAR SERVER

All those wishing to join the Altar Server Ministry at St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church must meet the following requirements:

### QUALIFICATIONS

- † Altar Server's family must be registered members of St. Matthias the Apostle parish.
- † Servers must actively practice the Catholic faith and must have received their first Holy Communion.
- † Servers must have completed third grade.

### INTENTIONS

- † New Altar Servers must be able to answer this question, "Why do you want to be an Altar Server?"
- † Altar Servers must understand and be prepared to carry out the commitment that is required of them. They need to know and understand the principles of devotion, dedication and discipline.

### KNOWLEDGE

- † An Altar Server must be very familiar with the Mass. They must understand why the Mass is important, and what happens during the Mass.
- † Before they serve for the first time, a Server will be required to demonstrate that they know the Main parts of the liturgical year (Advent, Christmas, Lent, etc.), Order of Mass, the prayers of the Mass, and all of the postures and responses during the Mass.



## TRAINING

Training will be scheduled regularly for all new altar servers. Once servers have completed the initial training, they will be able to begin serving as an **Apprentice**. After a server has qualified to serve, they will be added to the regular altar server schedule. All servers must continue to participate in ongoing training through:

- 1) The Altar Server Advancement Process
- 2) Training resources
- 3) Regular practices

Altar servers will be trained to handle all of the tasks assigned to each specific duty. Servers will be required to memorize the prayer responses of the Mass, know the names of the vestments and sacramentals of the altar, and to learn the **Order of the Mass**.

## PRACTICE

Practice will be held at regular intervals. Practices give every server the occasion to improve their current skills as well as the opportunity to learn new ones.

Some practices will be mandatory for all servers. Practices are mandatory when there is significant new information, or when there are liturgical changes.

When a server misses a mandatory practice, they will be required to make up the practice before being scheduled again. Every effort will be made to give the server a choice of multiple sessions for mandatory practices.

Most practices will be optional, which means that a server should make a personal decision if they need to attend or not. However, all servers will be required to attend a minimum number of optional practices each year. Currently, servers are required to attend a practice at least once every three months. Servers who fall below this requirement may be excluded from the schedule until they attend practice.

Wherever possible, attempts will be made to offer practice at various times to allow for flexible schedules.

## ADVANCEMENT

As servers grow in their knowledge, their skill, and their maturity, they will be recognized through advancement in the Altar Server Program.

Advancement through the levels of the program is not automatic, nor is it guaranteed. Altar Servers will have to prove themselves ready for promotion by demonstrating their **Devotion, Dedication, and Discipline**

(Information on how to advance between each level is listed on pages 18-21).



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **THE ALTAR SERVER'S COMMITMENT**

Service at the altar is a serious responsibility and should be viewed as such. Altar Servers are expected to exhibit behavior which demonstrates their genuine commitment to their Ministry.

#### **DEVOTION - A COMMITMENT TO WHAT WE BELIEVE**

- † A love of God and the Catholic Faith.
- † A strong desire to do God's work and serve his people.
- † A willingness to conduct yourself in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord.

Even if they are not serving, anytime an Altar Server is in the church their actions should be an example to the rest of the people at Mass. Altar Servers wearing vestments are an extension of the clergy.

Devoted Altar Servers know that their service is important to the whole faith community. Through their service at the Altar, others are able to grow in their love of the Lord.

#### **DEDICATION - A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE ACT**

- † The commitment to fully meet the requirements of the service for which you have been chosen.
- † The commitment to fulfill your duties when you are scheduled.
- † The commitment to help the entire altar server team to do well.

Dedication to service comes from our love and Devotion to the Lord. Dedicated Altar Servers know that others are counting on them. They help less skilled servers when needed, and they never say "That's not my job."

#### **DISCIPLINE - A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE SERVE**

- † The self-control that allows Altar Servers to carry out their duties with precision.
- † The determination to do what needs to be done, the right way every time.
- † The desire to be prepared, to arrive early to help prepare for Mass, and to ensure that the rest of the Altar Server Team is prepared.
- † The initiative to pay attention and think about what they will do next.
- † The ambition to improve each time they serve. Asking at the end of each Mass, "What could I have done better?"
- † The motivation to listen to coaching with an open mind and a willing heart.

Dedication to proper service pushes us to be more disciplined. The most disciplined Altar Servers are rewarded with more responsibility such as training new servers.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### GENERAL CONDUCT

- † Once an Altar Server puts on the alb and cincture, they are “On Duty” and their conduct must always be that of a role model with regard to acting reverential, respectful and worshipful. Altar Servers must show respect for the sanctity of the church and their duties at all times.
- † Altar Servers should come to Mass prepared to receive the Lord in Holy Communion. They should consider whether they need to receive the Sacrament of Confession ahead of time, and, if needed, make appropriate arrangements to do so.
- † Properly serving at the Holy Mass requires Altar Servers to focus primarily on Reverence, Awareness and Participation.

#### 1. Reverence

- † Move slowly, smoothly and respectfully at all times while serving at the altar.
- † When processing, keep your eyes straight ahead. Do not look at or acknowledge anyone in the congregation.
- † If not holding anything while standing, kneeling or processing, the Altar Servers hands should be folded reverently in the “*Prayer Position*” – i.e. hands held in front of chest; palms and fingertips together with thumbs crossed and fingers pointed upwards – not straight up but at an angle that is comfortable.
- † Keep talking to a minimum and only when necessary.
- † When two or more Altar Servers are moving together they should move as a unit. In other words they should process in-step (always start to process with the left foot); stop together as one, turn as one; bow as one; genuflect as one; etc.

#### 2. Awareness

- † Pay attention to the Order of the Mass.
- † Pay close attention to the Priest and Deacon and respond quickly to any gesture or instruction.
- † Simply by your presence, your reverence, your participation, your listening to the Word of God with an attentive ear, you will help to lead the worship and encourage those who see you.
- † Remember, if you are sloppy and casual in your attitude, posture and movements, that will be communicated to everyone. It will distract people away from Christ and toward you, and the Mass is not about you any more than it is about me or the priest.

#### 3. Participation

- † Active participation in the Mass is an Altar Server responsibility and is mandatory.
- † An Altar Server is required to properly respond along with the congregation and say and/or sing all the appropriate prayers of the Mass – clearly and audibly.
- † Please understand – YOU ARE NOT AN OBSERVER. You are an active participant in the Holy Mass and are setting an example for the rest of the congregation.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **SCHEDULING**

- † There should be three Altar Servers scheduled at each Mass. There may also be up to two Apprentice Servers scheduled at a particular Mass.
- † When you registered as an altar server, you indicated the Masses you prefer to serve. You will be scheduled for the Masses you prefer, except in extraordinary circumstances, or if you request a change.
- † If you are available to substitute at another Mass, please let the Altar Server Coordinator know.
- † If you would like to serve at an extraordinary Mass (for example, Easter Vigil or Christmas Midnight) please let the Coordinator know.
- † The Altar Server Schedule is typically prepared a month in advance. Schedules are available in several locations:
  - Posted in the vestry.
  - Listed in the Sunday bulletin the week before your scheduled date.
- † Servers should work with their parents to ensure that they are serving at the Masses for which they are scheduled.
- † If you are unable to serve when you have been scheduled, please contact another server to fill in for you as soon as possible – don't wait until the night before! Use the Altar Server Schedule to look at other Saturdays and Sundays on the schedule to see who else serves at Masses at the same time you're scheduled for. Try and work out a "swap" – that is...be willing to switch your serving time for theirs. Switching is the fairest way to work out schedule problems.
- † **ALTAR SERVERS MUST ARRANGE FOR THEIR OWN SUBSTITUTES.**
- † If, after a valid effort, a server is not able to find a substitute, they should call the Coordinator to seek further assistance.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Failing to show up when you are scheduled places an unfair burden on the other servers, and disrespects the Altar Server Ministry. The following "No-Show Policy" will be closely enforced.

#### **NO-SHOW POLICY**

The first time an Altar Server does not show up to serve a scheduled Mass, without finding a substitute, the server will be considered "Absent" and will be placed on "Warning" status for a period of six months.

The Altar Server Coordinator will contact the server's parents to ensure the seriousness of their commitment is well understood.

A server who is "Absent" from Mass an additional time during the "Warning" period will be asked to meet personally with the Coordinator to discuss their interest in the ministry. They will be removed from the schedule until this meeting occurs.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### ARRIVAL

Altar Servers are required to arrive early to prepare for Mass. It is important to arrive a minimum of 15 minutes prior to Mass beginning. There are several duties that a server must perform before Mass.

Often, there is some additional instructions regarding that day's liturgy that the priest and deacon may need to give to the servers.

Servers who are not scheduled for a particular Mass are asked to check to see that the assigned servers have arrived for Mass. This should be done at least 10 minutes before the Mass. If the scheduled server arrives late, please be forgiving to the assigned servers and let them serve in the position that they are assigned.

### ATTENDANCE TIMES

15 minutes before Mass: All scheduled Altar Servers have arrived in the Vestry.

10 minutes before Mass: Any server standing by can fill-in for any absent server

5 minutes before Mass: The Altar Server roles are "locked-in". No further changes are made.

**NOTE:** Servers arriving later than 5 minutes before the start of Mass will be considered "Absent", even if they show up later.

- † All servers are responsible for signing in when they arrive to serve. This should be one of your first actions when arriving before Mass.
- † Locate the Altar Server Book in the Sacristy. Read any "Notes to Servers" in the Altar Server's book. Sign in under today's Mass.
- † If you are substituting, please indicate for whom you are substituting.
- † If you are serving as an apprentice, then sign your name in and indicate that you are an apprentice. The Master Acolyte will note any "no shows" in the sign-in book.





## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **APPEARANCE AND DRESS**

- † All Altar Servers are expected to demonstrate good personal hygiene when serving at the altar. Servers should be recently showered/bathed, hair should be neatly arranged and fingernails clean and trimmed.
- † All servers are expected to wear “Dress clothes” when serving at the altar. Modesty is preferred over fashion. Please, no jeans, shorts, or t-shirts.
- † What you wear under your alb will show through and can be distracting. For this reason, servers should avoid stripes and designs. Light, solid colors are recommended for the shirt or blouse with dark, solid colors recommended for the pants or skirt.
- † Shoes should be clean and polished dress-style shoes. Black or brown or white (for girls). Athletic-style shoes, sandals or flip-flops are not appropriate for serving at the altar and should not be worn.
- † Servers should refrain from excessive or flashy jewelry. Other than a cross or sacred medal worn under the alb, and modest earrings for girls, all other jewelry should be removed and left with a friend or parent.
- † Watches may be worn if they are not a distraction to the server or others.
- † Watch alarms must be silenced. Cell phones are not to be carried while serving at Mass.
- † Do not wear jewelry which could be distracting. No dangling-type ear rings
- † Young ladies’ makeup should be minimal and modest.
- † Makeup should never be applied so that it is distracting or heavy enough to stain vestments. Albs have been stained in the past by too much makeup.
- † Short hair is strongly preferred for boys. Long hair for boys or girls must be very neatly presented so as not to fall into or on any sacramental.
- † Neutral colors are preferred for hair accessories.

### **ALBS**

- † Albs are sorted in the vestry by size.
- † Select an alb that fits comfortably, and is long enough to cover to your ankles.
- † Fasten the alb at the waist with a cincture matching the liturgical color of the week. Tie the cincture in a "girth-hitch" knot snug enough to hold the alb in place. See the appendix pg. 22 for a pictorial on how to tie a rope cincture.
- † After Mass, return your alb to its original place (by size) on the appropriately colored hanger. Zip it on the hanger, facing the correct direction.
- † Unknot your cincture and put it back in the proper plastic bin.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **POSTURES WHILE SERVING AT THE ALTAR**

- † The posture of the Altar Server should be one of near invisibility. People at Mass should barely notice you and those who do should see an Altar Server who is reverent and paying total attention to what they are doing.
- † In general, your posture and movements should be confident, smooth and deliberate.
- † Always focus on the Order of Mass.
- † Listen closely to the prayers of the Mass – they're beautiful. When someone is speaking or reading a part of the Mass, you are listening to them – while also keeping an eye on the Priest and/or Deacon.
- † When the bread and wine are being consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Christ, you should be completely focused on and aware of the miracle taking place in front of you.
- † When the congregation is praying or singing a liturgical response, each Altar Server is required to respond along with the congregation.
- † Make no distracting motions or noises. Do not look at, wave, smile, or acknowledge anyone in the congregation. Your friends and family will be proud of you as an Altar Server and they may smile or even wave at you. Demonstrate your discipline and impress them by attending to your duties at Mass without acknowledging them. You will have time to visit with them after Mass.
- † Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a handkerchief/ tissue – or at last resort, with the crook of your arm. Suppress the urge to yawn – but if unavoidable, please cover your mouth with your hand. No one wants to see your tonsils.
- † Do not leave your place during Mass for any reason other than an emergency. Bodily needs should be attended to before and after Mass.

### **STANDING**

- † When standing, stand up straight. Balance your weight evenly on both feet, but do not lock your knees.
- † Whenever you are not holding anything, fold your hands with palms together, in the "prayer position".
- † If you are holding something, hold the item firmly with one or both hands, as needed. The free hand, if you have one, should cover your heart. Grasp items firmly and deliberately. When handing something to someone else, make sure they have it before you completely let go of it.

### **PROCESSING**

- † When you process into church, remember that you are leading the whole people of God into the presence of God. The cross will be lifted high, and you will walk with a solemn and stately posture, for you are leading all of us into the presence of the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings.
- † When you move in the house of God, do so with simple solemnity. Know where you are going and move there with the grace of youth and the dignity of a saint.
- † When carrying something while processing, hold it reverently with both hands and slightly in front of you, not resting on your chest. Candles and the processional cross should be carried straight up and down.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **WALKING**

Walk. NEVER run. You are the role model of reverence, calm and composure. Walk purposefully to your station. Watch for others in your way and plan ahead to step around them. Never get in the way of the presiders, or of any minister holding the Blessed Sacrament. Hands are folded prayerfully or firmly grasping whatever you may be carrying.

### **SITTING**

- † While sitting, sit up straight. PLEASE...do not slouch – it looks terrible from the pews.
- † Keep your feet in front of you and flat on the floor. One should never remove their shoes while sitting.
- † Do not cross your legs or ankles.
- † Do not look around or at the congregation.
- † Keep your legs, your feet, your hands and your eyes still – don't fidget. Stay focused.
- † Hands should be folded prayerfully or resting comfortably in your lap.
- † Respond to prayers and sing songs deliberately and noticeably. Fully participate in the Mass along with the congregation – you are not an observer.

### **KNEELING**

While kneeling, keep your body straight, not slouching or resting on your feet. If kneeling behind a chair or pew, do not lean over it. Feet should be directly behind you. Keep your legs and feet still. Keep your hands folded prayerfully.

### **BOWING**

You should not bow when carrying the cross or a candle.

Bow of the Head: Lower your chin to your chest and hold it there briefly. There are several times in the Mass when this is done. Also, anytime a priest bows to you, return the bow with a head bow.

Profound Bow (Full Bow): Bend at the waist and bow forward (like a Japanese greeting). This is used during the Profession of Faith and a few other times.

### **GENUFLECTING**

- † With your back straight and your hands folded prayerfully, lower yourself and touch your right knee to the floor. Hold that position for a brief second and then return to a standing position.
- † Everyone, servers included, should genuflect in front of the tabernacle unless holding something in their hands.
- † Our Lord's presence in the tabernacle is normally signified by the burning of the red sanctuary candle. When the sanctuary candle is not lit, the tabernacle is empty - as on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



## **SERVER ADVANCEMENT LEVELS - AN OVERVIEW**

### **APPRENTICE ALTAR SERVER**

- † An Apprentice is a candidate that is learning how to become an Altar Server. Apprentices will be scheduled at the Masses they wish to serve. At the discretion of the presiding priest, Apprentices may process in the opening and closing procession. Apprentices sit in reserved seats that allow them to be close enough to directly observe and learn from the Altar Servers.
- † Serving at the altar can be a little scary at first. The Apprentice Program is a chance for new servers to get past being nervous and build the confidence that they need to enjoy service. It also gives the Altar Server Coordinator an opportunity to observe new servers and determine when they are ready to be active Altar Servers.

### **JUNIOR ALTAR SERVER**

- † Once an apprentice becomes certified, they are promoted to Junior Altar Server. Junior Altar Servers are learning new parts of the Mass and new responsibilities. In this first year, they are demonstrating to themselves and to the community that they are fully capable of service at all parts of the Mass.

### **SENIOR ALTAR SERVER**

- † The main body of servers is made up of Senior Altar Servers. They are promoted to this position based on their proven track record of service. They may learn new responsibilities for special services, but their competence at weekend Mass is well established.

### **MASTER ALTAR SERVER**

- † Some Senior Altar Servers will show a commitment to leadership in their service. They reach out to newer servers to help them learn. They drive their Altar Server teams to excel. These servers may be recognized as Lead Altar Servers, and given responsibilities beyond what other servers are asked or permitted to do.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



# THE ORDER OF MASS

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

Preparing to celebrate the Eucharist.

1. **ENTRANCE CHANT** We gather as a community and praise God in song.
2. **GREETING** We pray the Sign of the Cross. The priest welcomes us.
3. **PENITENTIAL ACT** We acknowledge our sins and humbly ask God for mercy.
4. **GLORIA** We praise God in song.
5. **COLLECT** We ask God to hear our prayers.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

Hearing God's plan of salvation.

6. **FIRST READING** We listen to God's Word, usually from the Old Testament.
7. **RESPONSORIAL PSALM** We respond to God's Word in song.
8. **SECOND READING** We listen to God's Word from the New Testament.
9. **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** We sing "Alleluia!" to praise God for the Good News. During Lent we use a different acclamation.
10. **GOSPEL READING** We stand and listen to the Gospel of the Lord.
11. **HOMILY** The priest or the deacon explains God's Word.
12. **PROFESSION OF FAITH** We proclaim our faith through the Creed.
13. **UNIVERSAL PRAYER** We pray for our needs and the needs of others.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



# LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Celebrating Christ's presence in the Eucharist

- 14. PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS** We bring gifts of bread and wine to the altar.
- 15. PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS** The priest prays that God will accept our sacrifice.
- 16. PREFACE** We give thanks and praise to God.
- 17. HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** We sing an acclamation of praise.
- 18. EUCHARISTIC PRAYER** This prayer of thanksgiving is the center and high point of the entire celebration.
  - † **Consecration** The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
  - † **The Mystery Of Faith** We proclaim the mystery of our faith.
  - † **Amen** We affirm the words and actions of the Eucharistic Prayer.
- 19. LORD'S PRAYER** We pray the Our Father.
- 20. SIGN OF PEACE** We offer one another Christ's peace.
- 21. LAMB OF GOD** We pray for forgiveness, mercy, and peace.
- 22. COMMUNION** We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
- 23. PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION** We pray that the Eucharist will strengthen us to live as Jesus did.

## CONCLUDING RITES

Going forth to glorify the Lord by our lives

- 24. FINAL BLESSING** We receive God's blessing.
- 25. DISMISSAL** We go in peace, glorifying the Lord by our lives



# St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



## PRAYERS OF THE MASS

(To be recited/sung by all Servers – clearly & audibly)

### PENITENTIAL ACT

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

*(Strike the breast)*

through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;

*(Continue)*

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

### GLORIA (recited or sung)

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless You,  
we adore You,  
we glorify You,  
we give You thanks for Your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, You take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us; You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;  
You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.  
For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### NICENE CREED

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through Him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
He came down from heaven,

*(Solemn Bow)*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

*(Continue)*

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
He suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
Who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
Who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.





## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston — Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **INVITATION TO PRAYER**

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands  
for the praise and glory of His name  
for our good and the good of all His holy Church.

### **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

### **OUR FATHER**

Our Father, Who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

### **LAMB OF GOD**

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **APPRENTICE ALTAR SERVER**

- † The Apprentice Program gives new Altar Servers the opportunity to learn by closely watching experienced Altar Servers. The Apprentice's job is to watch and learn.
- † Apprentices dress in albs and walk in procession with the regular Altar Servers, behind the Candles. They immediately take their seats in the front pew to the left of the main aisle.
- † At the Sign of Peace, the Apprentices come into the Sanctuary with the other Servers to receive Communion, and then return to their pews. At the closing Procession, the Apprentices stand in front of the first pew, on either side of the Candles. Then, they follow the Candles down the aisle.
- † At the discretion of the head server for a Mass, an Apprentice may be called upon to serve in place of an absent server. Therefore, apprentices should be prepared to actively serve, if required.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- † Persons meeting the requirements to become an Altar Server (see page 3) are admitted to the Apprentice level after attending a new Altar Server training.
- † Apprentice Altar Servers are expected to be familiar with the Order of Mass. They should know the Prayers of the Mass well enough to participate fully (see Order of Mass on pp. 13-14).
- † Apprentices must be able to recite the following prayers from memory:
  - a. Penitential Act (I confess to Almighty God...)
  - b. Invitation to Prayer (May the Lord accept the sacrifice...)
  - c. Holy, Holy, Holy
  - d. The Lord's Prayer (Our Father, who art in heaven...)
  - e. Lamb of God
- † Following training, Apprentices must be able to identify the following parts of the church:
  - a) Altar
  - b) Ambo
  - c) Sanctuary
  - d) Sacristy
  - e) Vestry
  - f) Altar Server chairs
  - g) Presider's Chair
- † Following training, Apprentices must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:
  - a) Book of Prayers (vs the white binder)
  - b) Sacramentary
  - c) Chalice
  - d) Ciborium
  - e) Cruets

After three Masses serving as an Apprentice, the Altar Server may request to become certified as a Junior Altar Server.



## **JUNIOR ALTAR SERVER**

† Junior Altar Servers are learning to master service at the Mass. They are competent in their duties, and are working to learn more about the various roles and responsibilities of the Altar Server.

### Requirements:

† Served at least three times as an apprentice, and attended two practices; **or** obtained the Altar Server coordinator's sign-off (for example, if they are transferring from a different parish)

- 1) Must meet all of the Apprentice requirements.
- 2) Must be able to recite the following prayers from memory:
  - a) All of the Apprentice prayers
  - b) Gloria
  - c) At least one Memorial Acclamation
- 3) Must be able to identify the following parts of the Church:
  - a) Credence Table
  - b) Narthex
- 4) Must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:
  - a) All the Sacramentals from the Apprentice list
  - b) Book of Gospels
  - c) Lectionary
  - d) Lavabo
  - e) Corporal
  - f) Purificator
  - g) Pall
  - h) Paten
  - i) Easter Candle
- 5) Must be able to demonstrate the following:
  - a) Profound Bow
  - b) Head Bow
  - c) Genuflection
  - d) How to light candles using the candle lighter.
  - e) How to properly extinguish a candle using the snuffer.
  - f) How to carry the Processional Cross and Candles.
  - g) How to tie a cincture
  - h) How to use the lavabo with one server and with two servers.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### SENIOR ALTAR SERVER

- † Senior Altar Servers have demonstrated a high proficiency at regular service at the Mass. They have served at special occasions and are capable of fulfilling almost all of the needs of the Parish for Altar Service.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

- † Served at least one calendar year as a Junior Altar Server, with a minimum of 10 Masses;
  - † Served in all positions (CROSS and CANDLES);
  - † Served at least two special Masses or services (Easter Vigil, Christmas Midnight, Stations of the Cross).
- 1) Must meet all of the Junior Altar Server requirements.
  - 2) Must be able to recite the following prayers from memory:
    - a. All of the Junior Altar Server prayers.
    - b. Nicene Creed
    - c. All other acclamations of the Mass.
  - 3) Must be able to identify the following parts of the Church:
    - a. All of the parts of the church required of Junior Altar Servers.
    - b. Ambry
    - d. Sacarium
    - e. Tabernacle
  - 4) Must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:
    - a. All the Sacramentals from the Apprentice list.
    - b. Aspergillum
    - c. Aspersorium
    - d. Boat
    - e. Lunette
    - f. Monstrance
    - g. Pyx
    - h. Thurible
  - 5) Must be able to show the following:
    - a. All of the postures and duties at Mass.
    - b. How to serve with only one or two servers.
  - 6) Must participate in the direct training of a more junior server.



## **MASTER ALTAR SERVER**

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- † Master Altar Servers have at least three full years of experience as an Altar Server.
- † They have mastered all aspects of service of the regular Mass and have participated in multiple special occasion Masses.
- † Master Altar Servers are the peer leaders of the Altar Server Ministry. They train other servers, particularly Apprentices.
- † They advise the Altar Server Coordinator in the conduct of the ministry.
- † Not all servers will qualify as Master Altar Servers. Those who aspire to higher dedication in their service should discuss their intentions with the Altar Server Coordinator.



# CM ALMY

## HOW TO TIE A ROPE CINCTURE



Fold cincture in half



Wrap around waist with knots on your right side



Grab end of loop made by the fold and overlap as shown



Using right hand, slip loop over left hand, keeping hold of cincture



Grab knotted end with your right hand



Slip knotted ends through loop (where left hand is making sure that single loop is on top of double cincture.) Feed knotted ends through loop from top to bottom



Drop loop and then tighten around waist



Knot is on left hip



## APPENDIX

### A GUIDE TO THE ITEMS USED IN THE MASS

#### VESTMENTS

The vestments used at Mass today are ancient in origin. In the earliest days of the Church, Mass was usually celebrated in people's homes. The priest and other ministers wore what everybody else wore. As years passed, the Church community got much bigger, so Mass had to be celebrated in large buildings - sometimes with thousands of people present. People had to be able to tell easily who the various ministers were. As a result, special garments were adopted for the various ministers at Mass.



**ALB:** This long, white, dress-like vestment can be worn by all liturgical ministers. It is used by Altar Servers in place of a cassock and surplice. Alb is short for “*tunica alba*” which means white tunic.



**CINCTURE:** This is a long thick cord, usually with tassels or knots on the end, which is used for fastening an alb at the waist.



**DALMATIC**  
A loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves worn by the deacon. The color varies according to the liturgical season or feast.



#### CASSOCK AND SURPLICE

- † The **CASSOCK** is a long outer garment worn by clerics and servers. It is usually black, but on special feasts, it can be red or white. The length should reach the top of the shoes.
- † The **SURPLICE** is a white, wide-sleeved garment worn over the cassock.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston — Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### **CHASUBLE**

The sleeveless outer garment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulders and covering the alb and stole of the priest. Is the proper Mass vestment for the main celebrant and its color varies according to the liturgical season or feast.



### **PRIEST STOLE**

A long cloth “scarf”, often ornately decorated, of the same color and style as the chasuble. A priest wears it around the neck, letting it hang down in the front.



### **DEACON STOLE**

A long cloth “scarf”, often ornately decorated, of the same color and style as the chasuble. A deacon wears it over his left shoulder fastened at his right side - like a sash.





## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston — Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### EXAMPLE OF VESTMENTS WORN FOR BENEDICTION



#### COPE

A cape-like garment which is put over the shoulders and hangs to the ankles. It is open in the front and worn by a priest or deacon at Benediction or in solemn processions.



#### HUMERAL VEIL

A long narrow shawl-like vestment used at Benediction and in solemn processions when the Blessed Sacrament is being carried in the Monstrance.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### LITURGICAL COLORS

Liturgies celebrated during the different seasons of the liturgical year have distinctive music and specific readings, prayers, and rituals. The colors of the vestments that the priest wears during the liturgy also help express the character of the mysteries being celebrated.



**White**, the color of joy and victory, is used for the seasons of Easter and Christmas. It is also used for the feasts of Our Lord, for feasts of Mary, the angels, and for saints who are not martyrs. **Gold** may also be used on solemn occasions.



**Red** (the color of blood) is used on days when we celebrate the passion of Jesus on Passion Sunday and Good Friday. It is also used for the birthday feasts of the apostles and evangelists and for the celebrations of martyrs. Red (the color of fire) recalls the Holy Spirit and is used on Pentecost and for the sacrament of Confirmation.



**Green**, symbolizes life and hope and is used during Ordinary Time.



**Violet** or **Purple** during ADVENT help us to remember that we are preparing for the coming of Christ. LENT, the season of penance and renewal, also uses the colors violet or purple.



**Rose** may be used on the Third Sunday of Advent - GAUDETE SUNDAY, and on the Fourth Sunday of Lent - LAETARE SUNDAY. It expresses the joy of anticipation for Christmas and Easter, respectively.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### SACRAMENTALS USED AT MASS

The Sacramentals that we use at Mass are also ancient in origin. Some come from the ancient traditions of the Old Testament sacrifice. Some are modeled after things we use every day. The most special of these are used to hold the Blessed Sacrament. Anything which touches the Eucharist is washed in a special sink, called a Sacramarium, which drains directly into the earth, so that not even the smallest part of Christ's Body or Blood is treated disrespectfully.

- ASPERGILLUM** An instrument used to sprinkle holy water on the faithful or articles to be blessed. Typically a perforated metal ball containing a sponge on a handle. The bucket into which the aspergillum is dipped is called the “aspersorium”.
- BOAT** The incense boat is a covered metal bowl with a hinged lid used to hold the incense to be put in the thurible. It typically has a matching spoon.
- BOOK OF GOSPELS** A special edition of the Lectionary which contains only the gospel readings for Mass. It is often more ornate and decorated than the simpler Lectionary.
- CANDLE LIGHTER** A long hollow tube containing a wick for carrying a flame to light the altar candles. Typically includes a candle extinguisher on the opposite end.
- CANDLES** There are two main types of candles used in most Masses. The Processional Candles are carried in the procession. The altar candles and ambo candles remain in place on the sides.
- CHALICE** A special cup lined with gold used to hold wine which is transformed into the Precious Blood of Christ during the Mass.
- CIBORIUM** (plural: ciboria) A bowl, sometimes on a pedestal, lined with gold, used to hold the bread which is transformed into the Body of Christ during the Mass.
- CRUET** A small glass pitcher with a stopper used to hold water and wine.
- FINGER TOWEL** A plain white linen or cotton towel used by the priest to dry his fingers after the ceremonial washing.
- LAVABO** The small bowl that catches the water poured over the priest's hands at the ceremonial washing.
- LECTIONARY** The book of Scriptures from which the First and Second readings, and sometimes the Psalms are read.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



<b>LUNETTE</b>	A small, circular receptacle, having a glass face that holds the Blessed Sacrament in the Monstrance. It slides into the Monstrance on a small track.
<b>MONSTRANCE</b>	A large, ornate, often gold covered vessel used to hold the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration, Benediction and solemn Eucharistic processions.
<b>PALL</b>	<u>At Mass:</u> A square stiff linen cloth used to cover the chalice. <u>At Funerals:</u> A large white cloth that covers the casket.
<b>PATEN</b>	A small ornate plate which sits on top of the chalice and holds the Host at the Consecration.
<b>PURIFICATORS</b>	Linen towels, folded in thirds, used to wipe the edge of a Chalice or Communion Cup after each communicant has received the Precious Blood at Holy Communion.
<b>PYX</b>	A small metal receptacle used to hold the Eucharist to be taken to the sick or homebound.
<b>SACRAMENTARY</b>	The book of prayers and instructions for the Priest which includes all Masses, special prayers and rites.
<b>THURIBLE</b>	A metal container extended from a chain in which charcoal and incense are burned for liturgical ceremonies. It has a lid that can be raised. It is used at solemn Masses and Benediction.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### THE CHURCH BUILDING SACRAMENTALS

Churches have changed over the centuries. Early Christians met in private homes to celebrate the Eucharist. Often, they met in secret to avoid persecution. Churches in the Middle Ages were often the center of a town, and the largest building. Today's churches can be large or small, traditional or modern. All Catholic churches have important features in common.

- AMBO** The raised reading stand where the Scriptures are read and where the homily is normally given.
- AMBRY** The locked cabinet that stores the blessed oils used for Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and the Anointing of the Sick. The bishop blesses these oils during Holy Week at the Chrism Mass.
- CHOIR** Refers to that group of persons who assist the congregation in their duty of singing the liturgy. Choir also refers to that area of the church space reserved for this group. Musical instruments are located in this space as well.
- CREDENCE TABLE** A smaller table near the altar where the sacred vessels are kept during Mass when they are not being used at the altar.
- NARTHEX** The enclosed room between the outside doors and the nave.
- NAVE** The main area of the church where the faithful sit during Mass.
- SACRARIUM** A sink in the Sacristy area which has its drain going directly to the earth and usually fitted with a cover and a lock. It is used to dispose of sacred linen and vessel wash and rinse water, used hold water, used baptismal water and blessed ashes. The Sacrarium is never used for anything else.
- SACRISTY** The room where the vestments and sacramentals are kept.
- SANCTUARY** The open space immediately around the altar. The St. Matthias sanctuary is a raised platform with steps. It is in this space that you find the presider's chair, altar, ambo, cross and candles.
- STOUP** The holy water fonts at the entrances of the church.
- TABERNACLE** A locked, ornamented receptacle or cabinet in which a pyx or ciborium containing the reserved consecrated Eucharist is stored.



# St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



## EXAMPLE OF SACRAMENTALS USED AT MASS



**CHALICE** - The consecrated gold or gilded silver cup used to hold the Precious Blood during the Mass



**CIBORIUM** - A large cup of precious metal which holds the consecrated Eucharist.



**CIBORIA** - A bowl of precious metal which holds the Body of Christ during distribution of Holy Communion.



**COMMUNION CUP** - A cup of precious metal with holds the Blood of Christ during distribution of Holy Communion



### TABERNACLE

The receptacle gilded with precious metal that serves as a place for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. It should be of solid material, opaque, secure and inviolable, fitting the architecture of the church in a preeminent place.



**CRUETS** – Small glass jars with stoppers which hold the water and wine used at Mass.



### HOLY WATER POT ( Aspersorium ) AND SPRINKLER ( Aspergillum )

Used to sprinkle holy water on the faithful or on items to be blessed.



**FLAGON OR DECANTER** – A pitcher-like vessel used to hold the wine that will be consecrated at Mass for the communion of the people.



**PALL** - A small linen covered board used to cover the chalice.



## St. Matthias the Apostle Catholic Church

Archdiocese of Galveston – Houston, Texas

Established 1978



### MONSTRANCE

A sacred vessel designed to expose the consecrated Host to the congregation either for adoration in church or carrying in solemn procession, particularly on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.



### CENSOR AND BOAT

- † The Censor, also known as a Thurible, is a metal container extended from a chain in which charcoal and incense are burned for liturgical ceremonies. It has a lid that can be raised.
- † The Boat is a small metal container that holds the incense to be burned in the thurible. It has a cover and comes with a small spoon. Frequently shaped like a boat, it is a symbol of the Church.



**SANCTUARY LAMP** - An oil lamp or wax candle that burns near the tabernacle. It is always lit whenever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in churches or chapels as a sign of the honor shown to the Lord.



**PURIFICATOR** - A triple folded white cloth used to cleanse the chalice and the celebrant's fingers after the last ablution (washing).



### CORPORAL

- † The corporal is a large square piece of linen. It is usually plain. Only a single cross is embroidered in the center of the cloth or on the center front third of the cloth.
- † The corporal represents the shroud which was wrapped about the Sacred Body of our Redeemer before He was placed in the sepulcher.
- † It is the linen on which the priest places the Holy Eucharist during the Mass.
- † It is also the cloth on which the sacred vessels must always be placed when they contain the Blessed Sacrament.