

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

ALTAR SERVER'S HANDBOOK



2008

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HELPERS OF THE CHURCH'S PRAYER

1. Altar servers exercise an important role: helping the Priest to lead God's people in prayer. The care and attention that Altar servers give to their ministry allows the prayer of the Church to take place with *reverence and beauty*.
2. The *ministry* of assisting in the sanctuary enhances the beauty of the celebration for all who have been gathered together to pray
-- so know what you are doing and do it well !!

PROCEDURES

1. BEFORE MASS BEGINS

- a. Arrive early and sign in --- *not later than 15 minutes* before Mass.
 - i. If you cannot be present for an assignment, please call another Altar server from the list to take your place.
- b. Vest in an alb that fits you well.
 - i. Please wear your "Sunday best" clothes and good shoes (**no tennis shoes**).

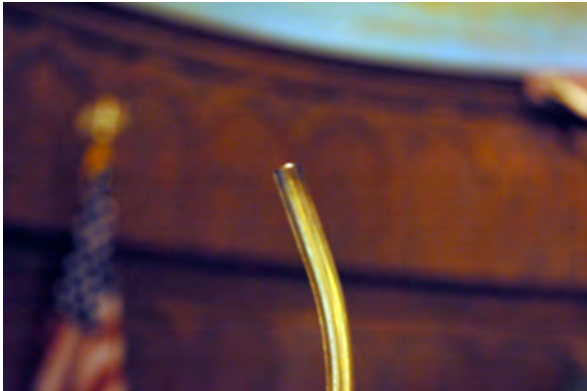


c. Light candles by the Tabernacle and Altar.

When finished leave the taper looking **like this:**



Not like this:



or



d. Ask the Priest if he will need the binder at any point during Mass. Ask the Deacon, if there is one, if he will need the binder.

e. Make sure that the credence table looks like this:



f. Wait quietly, ready to be of help.

g. Join the Priest and other ministers at the back of the church.

2. INTRODUCTORY RITES

- a. Procession during the Gathering Song:
 - i. Cross
 - ii. Candles
 - iii. Lector(s)
 - iv. Deacon (when present)
 - v. Priest



Line up like this at the foot of the sanctuary:



b. Place the items in Sacristy and stand at chairs **like this:**



not like this:



c. Be ready with the binder or the Book **like this:**



- d. If he asked for it, bring the binder to the Priest/Deacon at the Sign of the Cross/Greeting.
- e. **Bring the Book to the Priest near the end of the Gloria.**
- f. **During Lent**, bring the Book to the Priest when he is saying “*May Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life*”
- g. Stand like this with the binder or the Book:



You may need to rest it on your head depending on how tall you are or if you get tired.



h. When you sit, **sit like this**



Not like this:



3. LITURGY OF THE WORD

- a. Listen carefully to the Scripture Readings.
- b. If Incense will be used:
 - i. Go to sacristy after the First Reading to prepare the Incense.
 - ii. When the “Alleluia” begins, bring the Incense to the Priest.
 - iii. Lead the Priest/Deacon to the Ambo.
 - iv. Stand until the Gospel reading is ended, then return to the Sacristy. Swing the Thurible while you are standing.
- c. If he asked for it, bring the binder to the Priest, near the end of the Creed.

4. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- a. After the Prayer of the Faithful, place the Book and the Chalice on the Altar.
 - i. Bring up the Book and vessels like this:



- ii. The Book goes to the left and the chalice goes at the right corner of the Altar



iii. The Altar **should not** look like this:



iv. Nor should the water be on the Altar:



v. Join the Priest at the center aisle to receive gifts.



vi. Present the bread to the Priest.



vii. And the water and the wine together



viii. Then wait for him to return them to you.



- ix. Once **both of you have them back, not just one**, then return to get the finger towel and picture and bowl to wash his hands.



- x. **Do not place the bread or the wine directly on the Altar.**



- xii. During the Eucharistic prayer, participate in the same way as everyone else.



- xii. **You should not look like this:**



- xiii. During the distribution of Communion, remove the Book and the Chalice (if all the Precious Blood has been consumed) from the Altar.

xiv. If the Priest would like to purify the chalice, bring the water to him.



xv. Do not leave the water on the Altar.



5. CONCLUDING RITES

a. When you sit down, be prepared like this:



- b. Bring the Book to the Priest when he stands, *as he says, "Let us Pray"*



- c. **After the Dismissal, Bring the Cross and the Candles from the Sacristy. And stand like this:**



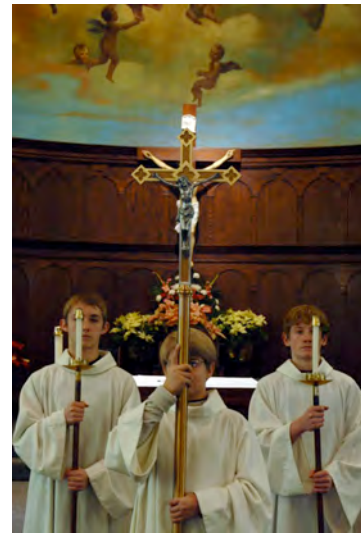
- d. **Not like this:**



e. When the Priest moves, move to the front of the sanctuary:



f. And process out in front of the Priest like this:



6. AFTER MASS

- a. Return items to Sacristy
- b. Extinguish the candles
- c. Return the albs to the closet.

d. Make sure you go straight down with the snuffer:



e. **And not at an angle:**



f. **Remember how to leave the wick:**



g. **Not like this:**



APPENDIX I

WHAT TO DO WHEN INCENSE IS USED

Usually, when Incense is used at Mass it is used at three different times:

- I. At the beginning
- II. At the Gospel
- III. At the preparation of the Altar

I. At the Beginning

The first time Incense is used is after everyone has entered the sanctuary.

1. The server with the Incense, that is, the thurifer, stands off to the left side and waits for the Priest to kiss the Altar.
2. After he has kissed the Altar, the thurifer approaches the Priest, hands the boat to the Deacon, if there is one, or directly to the Priest, and opens the Thurible like this:



3. The Priest puts some Incense in, blesses it, and then the thurifer closes the Thurible, and hands it to the Deacon, if there is one, or directly to the Priest.
4. The thurifer then steps out of the way (to the side) but stand ready to take the Thurible back when the Priest has finished incensing the Altar.
5. The thurifer then puts the Thurible away.
6. At the same time, put another charcoal in the Thurible so that it is ready for the Gospel.

II. At the Gospel

You'll need to be ready to go as soon as the Second Reading is finished.

1. So, at the end of the first reading, the thurifer, and candle bearers get up and go to the sacristy *quietly*.
2. In the sacristy, prepare with the Thurible and the candles, like this:



3. As soon as you hear the second reading finish, walk out the door and go to the Priest, lining up like this:



4. The thurifer presents the Thurible to the Priest just like before.
5. When he is finished, stand off to the side and wait for the Deacon or Priest to pick up the Book of the Gospels from the Altar.



6. Once the Deacon or Priest has the Book of the Gospels in his hands, the servers line up like this, and process over to the Ambo:



7. The candle bearers stand on either side of the Ambo, and the thurifer behind it, like this:



8. After the Deacon or Priest says “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to N.” he will turn around to take the Thurible from the thurifer.
9. When he is finished, he will hand it back, and everyone remains in place listening to the Gospel. The thurifer should swing the Thurible
10. When the Deacon or Priest kisses the Book of the Gospels, the servers turn around and return to the sacristy, like this:



All the items are returned to their places and the thurifer puts another charcoal in the Thurible so it will be ready for the Preparation of the Gifts.

III. At the Preparation of the Gifts

1. The cross bearer and the candle bearers set up the Altar like usual and then help to receive the gifts.
2. In the meantime, the thurifer goes to the sacristy and gets ready with the Incense.
3. After the candle bearers bring the water and the wine to the Deacon or Priest, but **before** they help him wash his hands, the thurifer goes to the Priest, and opens the Thurible like usual.
4. Like at the beginning of Mass, the thurifer hands the Thurible to the Deacon or Priest and takes a step back.
5. When the Priest has finished incensing the Altar, the Deacon will Incense the Priest and then the Assembly.
6. However, if there is no Deacon the thurifer will do this.
7. He bows to the Priest and swings the Thurible three times. He then moves to the front of the sanctuary, and once everyone has stood up, he bows to the people and swings the Thurible three times. (Ask the Priest for help before Mass if you are not sure.)
8. Once the Priest has been Incensed, the candle bearers come forward with the water, bowl, and towel to help the Priest wash his hands.
9. Once the people have been Incensed, the thurifer puts the Thurible away in the sacristy.
10. During Communion, the thurifer should put another charcoal in the Thurible so that it is ready for the closing procession.
11. Just before leaving the sacristy at the end of Mass, the thurifer should put some Incense in the Thurible (like the Priest usually does) so that there is smoke for the procession.

APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

THE MOST IMPORTANT TERMS

- The Blessed Sacrament: Christ's Body and Blood, the Eucharist
- Sacred Host is another term for The Body of Christ: once the Priest says "This is my body..." this only *appears* to be bread; it is now the Body of Christ
- Precious Blood is another term for The Blood of Christ: once the Priest says "This is my blood..." this only *appears* to be wine; it is now the Blood of Christ

OBJECTS

- Altar: table for the Sacrifice of the Mass
- Ambo: stand from which the Scriptures are read
- Credence Table: small table for holding the sacred vessels and books
- Presider's Chair: chair for the Priest-celebrant
- Sacristy: room for storing items for Mass
- Tabernacle: the container for reposing the Blessed Sacrament

ITEMS

- Boat: container which holds the Incense
- Thurible (censor): container which holds the lit charcoal
- Book of the Gospel: the book containing the Gospels
- Lectionary: Book of Scripture readings
- Paschal Candle: large, white Easter candle
- Processional Cross: used to lead processions
- Sacramentary (often referred to as "the Book"): contains the prayers used at Mass

VESSELS

- Chalice: cup for holding the Precious Blood
- Ciboria: container holding the Sacred Host
- Cruet: small container holding water or wine
- Holy Water Bucket: for blessing people, things
- Pitcher/Bowl: for washing the Priest's hands

VESTMENTS/MATERIALS

- Alb: white robe worn by liturgical ministers
- Cassock: black robe worn by servers
- Chasuble: outer Priest vestment whose color corresponds to the liturgical season, the symbol of pastoral love
- Cincture: rope-like belt
- Corporal: white linen cloth for the Altar used because of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament
- Finger Towel: for drying the Priest's hands
- Funeral Pall: covers the casket at funerals
- Purificator: white cloth used to care for the Precious Blood
- Stole: vestment worn over Priest's shoulders, the symbol of his Priestly authority
- Surplice: white garment worn over cassock