

# Saint Thomas More Church

## Altar Server Manual

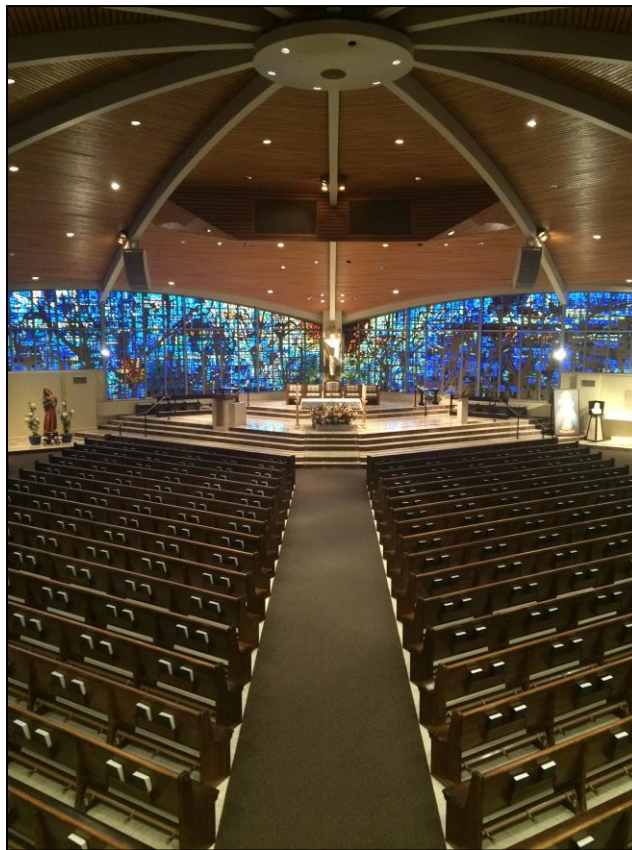
### 2021



Altar Server: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Altar Server,

Our parish is very grateful for your decision to serve at Mass. It is a privilege to kneel so close as Jesus Christ becomes truly present in the Eucharist. Therefore, servers are chosen from those who display a desire to grow closer to Our Lord.

The duty of an Altar Server is to assist the priest, as a representative of the people, as the mystery of Calvary unfolds on the altar. What an honor to serve the Lord at this most praiseworthy moment of our redemption. Although the duties of the altar server are varied, the most important responsibility of the altar server is to pray .

The place of the altar server in liturgical celebrations remains one of prominence and distinction. All actions of the server are woven from signs and symbols rooted in the Old and New Testament and passed down through Sacred Tradition. Accordingly, servers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with dignity and reverence to give God glory. The purpose for this manual is to give direction for our parish Masses and to be a guide to help you assist the priest at the Altar of God.

Oh, send out your light and your truth;  
let them lead me,  
let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your dwelling!  
Then I will go to the altar of God,  
to God my exceeding joy  
and I will praise you...  
O God, my God  
*-Psalm 43*

In Christ,  
The Clergy of St. Thomas More Church

## General Requirements

**1. Who may serve:** At Saint Thomas More, all registered parishioners who are in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade through High School are welcome to serve. All candidates must attend one training session and have the commitment and ability to perform their role with reverence.

**2. Proper Dress:** Altar Servers must show respect for the Mass they attend by wearing proper attire.

### Clothing:

- ◆ Dress pants/slacks or girls may also wear dresses or skirts of an appropriate length at least down to the knee
- ◆ Dress shirts/blouses must have sleeves, shoulders should be covered
- ◆ **No T-shirts, shorts or jeans.**

### Footwear:

- ◆ Dress shoes only; all footwear should look neat and presentable
- ◆ **No sneakers, flip-flops, or any open toe shoes/sandals**

### Hair:

- ◆ Hair should look clean and neat, out of one's eyes

### **3. Attendance:**

- ◆ Arrive no later than **15 minutes prior to the start of Mass** neatly groomed and dressed.
- ◆ If you are unable to serve at your scheduled time, use the online scheduler to find a substitute.
- ◆ If you are unable to find a substitute, please contact the rectory and leave a message.
- ◆ The Altar Servers' duties are complete when they have set up for the next Mass or brought the appropriate items back to the Sacristy and neatly hung up their albs and cinctures in the Altar Server Sacristy.



## The Order of Mass

The Mass is the heart and soul of our worship of God. It is the celebration that gives us the strength we need to live a Christian life, and, because of its importance, the Church places a serious obligation upon all of its members to take part in the Mass every Sunday and Holy Day.

The Mass is a sacrifice where Jesus offers Himself to the Father. It is also a sacred banquet called the Eucharist (from the Greek word for thanksgiving) where we give thanks to God and join in Jesus' perfect prayer of praise and thanks to the Father. At the Last Supper Jesus told His disciples, "Do this in memory of me," and so for the past 2,000 years, the Church has celebrated the Mass with two parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The following is a basic outline of the Mass:

### **Introductory Rites**

-Entrance Procession, Greeting, Penitential Act, Gloria, Collect (Opening Prayer)

### **Liturgy of the Word**

-1<sup>st</sup> Reading, Responsorial Psalm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, Gospel Acclamation, Gospel, Homily, Profession of Faith, Universal Prayer

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

-Presentation of the Gifts, Preparation of the Altar, Prayer Over the Gifts, Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), Eucharistic Prayer, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen

### **Communion Rite**

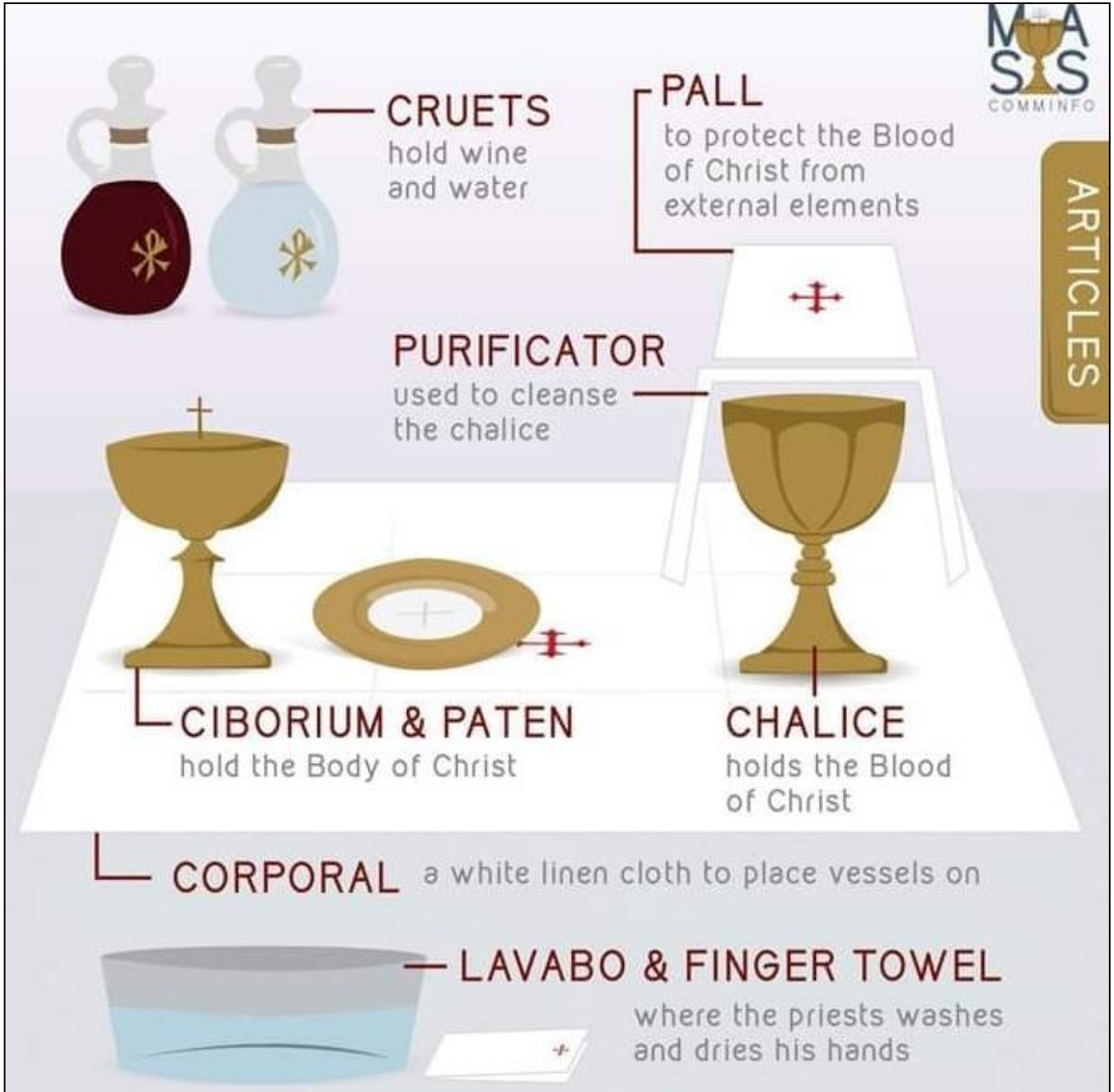
-The Lord's Prayer (Our Father), Sign of Peace, Communion

### **Concluding Rite**

-Prayer after Communion, Blessing & Dismissal, Recessional



## Sacred Vessels





Ciborium (plural *ciboria*)



Processional Candles



Monstrance



Processional Cross



Aspergillum &  
Holy Water Bucket



Pyx (low gluten Hosts)



Thurible & Incense Boat

## Vestments & Liturgical Colors



**Green:** A symbol of hope and growth. Green is the color of Ordinary Time to show that our common state in life is one of growing in our relationship with God, longing and hoping for eternal life.

**White or Gold:** A symbol of celebration, triumph, purity, and innocence. White is used on all feast days of the Joyful and Glorious Mysteries of our Lord's life such as Christmas and Easter, on the feasts of the Blessed Mother, angels, and saints who were not martyrs. White is worn frequently as every Mass is a celebration of Christ's Resurrection and is often worn at funerals to celebrate the life of the deceased and to pray for their triumphal acceptance into heaven.



**Red:** A symbol of sacrifice and the color of blood, red is used on all feasts of the Lord's Cross and Passion, feasts of the Apostles, and all martyrs. It is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit and used on Pentecost recalling the tongues of fire when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles.

**Violet:** A symbol of penance and waiting. Violet is used during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. It reminds us of preparation and the longing for the coming of our savior.



**Rose:** A symbol of joy and anticipation in the midst of the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. Rose vestments are worn on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, *Gaudete Sunday*, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, *Laetare Sunday*.

The **Chasuble**, in various liturgical colors, is worn for the celebration of the Mass with a matching **stole** symbolizing the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The **alb**, a white robe worn by the priest, with a **cincture** or belt (right) symbolizes chastity and purity of the priest's share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.



The **cope** (left) is a long cloak used in processions, benediction, and other liturgies outside of Mass. The **humeral veil** is a long garment which goes over the celebrant's shoulders to cover his arms when carrying the Blessed Sacrament and is used for benediction.



## Obligations Prior to Serving Mass

- ◆ Arrive 15 minutes prior to start of Mass in acceptable attire.
- ◆ Report to the main Sacristy to sign in under your name. If you are a substitute, sign your name under the scheduled person's name and place an "X" over his/her name. Find out what color cincture to wear.
- ◆ Go to the Altar Server Sacristy and put on an alb that is ankle length and a cincture that hangs by your left knee. Pray the "Altar Server's Prayer Before Mass." Return to the main Sacristy.



## Altar Server Designations

-**Cross Bearer (CB):** Holds the processional cross and leads processions.

-**Book Bearer (BB):** Holds and moves the Missal and binder for the priest.

-**2 Acolyte (A):** Hold the candles during the procession and recession. Assist at the offertory, the preparation of the chalice, the washing of hands, the ringing bells, the purifying of the chalice and clearing of the altar.

## Altar Server Job Descriptions

### **Cross Bearer (CB)**

1. The **Cross Bearer (CB)** leads the procession. After the music starts, wait until the people begin singing the lyrics, then walk **slowly** up the main aisle of the church. See the **Entrance Procession Diagram** on page 13.
2. When you arrive at the base of the stairs of the altar, move to the **right** and face the altar while waiting until the rest of the ministers arrive at the altar. See the **Sanctuary Diagram** on page 13.
3. The **CB** does not genuflect while holding the cross. Right before you reach the altar, line up with the right corner of the altar and wait until the priest and others arrive. You will all be in a straight line facing the altar. The priest will then turn and genuflect to the tabernacle, you will turn and do a slight head bow to the tabernacle. Then the priest head bow to the altar, you will also do a head bow. Then walk over and place the cross in the stand near the Tabernacle.
4. Then with *hands folded chest high* move to your place in the sanctuary and *stand* at your seat.
5. After the Homily, Creed and Intercessions (Response: Lord, hear our prayer), the congregation will sit. Remain standing and walk with *hands folded* to the cross and take it. Then move to the center aisle and stand between the first pews, while facing the altar. Wait until the Acolytes meet you.
6. Lead the Acolytes to the back of the church and wait until the people have gathered to bring up the gifts. When they are ready, slowly move up the center of the aisle in the same way as the beginning of Mass. When you arrive in the front, turn to the right, and return the cross to the stand. Then with your *hands folded*, return to your seat.
7. At the end of Mass, wait until the priest moves to kiss the altar. Get the cross and wait in the center aisle at the 1<sup>st</sup> pew facing the altar (facing away from the people). The **Acolytes** with candles will flank, and Book Bearer will be in front. All other ministers will line up in front of you facing the altar. They will first bow to the altar, then genuflect to the tabernacle. Join them with a slight head bow. Then turn around by turning to your right and **slowly** lead the procession to the rear of the Church.
8. Place the cross in the stand next to the blue counter in the sacristy.

## Acolytes (A)

1. One Acolyte lights the two processional candles in the sacristy immediately before Mass.
2. The two Acolytes (A) walk with processional candles **on either side** the cross. See the **Entrance Procession Diagram** on page 13.
3. When you arrive at the base of the stairs of the altar, move to the **left** and face the altar while waiting for the rest of the ministers. See the **Sanctuary Diagram** on page 13.
4. When the priest does so, first turn toward the Tabernacle and do a slight head bow, then turn to the altar and do another slight bow. Then move with *processional candles* to your place in the sanctuary on the left, blow out the candles, place them on the ledge off the stain glass, and *stand* at your seat.
5. When everyone sits for the offertory after the intercessions, the two Acolytes bring the chalice and any ciboria and/or pyx (anything gold or silver) from the credence table to the altar. **THE BOWL AND TOWEL STAY ON TABLE.**
6. Move with *hands folded* to the base of the altar stairs in front of the carpet and bow to the altar. Follow the Cross Bearer to the gift table in the rear of the church. Assist the gift-bearers for the Mass by handing them the wine and water cruets and any ciboria. Follow the cross with *hands folded* and lead the gift-bearers to the priest. When at the base of the altar stairs, both Acolytes move to the *left*, stand should-to-shoulder facing the priest, and wait for the priest/deacon to hand you each one cruet of wine or water.
7. Move to the left side of the altar, holding the cruets with **lids off/open and handles facing the priest** until the priest/deacon prepares the chalice. The Acolyte with the wine stands closer to the altar. **Hold the wine out first.**
8. As soon as the priest/deacon hands the cruets back to the Acolytes, both Acolytes do a **slight bow**, move to the credence table and put down the wine cruet. One Acolyte keeps the water cruet in one hand and takes the lavabo bowl in the other. The other Acolyte takes, and drapes towel over folded hands and under thumbs and both walk to the side of the altar.
9. This time the Acolyte with the water stands closer to the altar. When the priest turns toward you, pour a small amount of water over his hands, into the bowl. The other Acolyte keeps hands folded so the priest can place the finger towel on them. When finished, do a **slight bow to the priest** and place everything on the credence table and return to your seat with *hands folded*. Remain standing with *hands folded*.

10. While kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer, one Acolyte rings the bells at 4 places during the liturgy:

1.) The First-time the bells are **rung one time** during the Epiclesis.

The Priest will hold out his hands flat and side by side over the gifts.

The bells are rung to signify the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

2.) The Second time the bells are **rung three times** when the priest elevates the Host high above his head. This signifies the change of the bread into the Body of Christ.

3.) The Third time the bells are **rung three times** when the priest elevates the Chalice high above his head. This signifies the change of the wine into the Blood of Christ.

4.) The Last time the bells are **rung one time** when the priest drinks from the Chalice.

This happens during the Communion Rite.

This signifies the completion of the saving sacrifice of Christ.

### **Remember 1:3:3:1**

11. When Holy Communion is being distributed to the faithful, light the candles and leave them on the ledge.

12. When the priest is finished distributing Communion and returns to the altar, one Acolyte takes the **water cruets** to the side of the altar and the other Acolyte follows with *hands folded* and stands closer to the altar. Pour water into the chalice when the priest turns to you or hand him the cruets if he prefers. When he purifies the chalice, he will cover it. Bow and then take the chalice and water back to the credence table and sit.

13. At the end of Mass, wait until the priest moves to kiss the altar and take up the lit candles and move to the first pew on either side of the Cross Bearer. When the priest bows, do a slight head bow to the altar then a slight head bow to the tabernacle. Then, alongside the Cross, slowly process out. Place candles on the blue counter in the sacristy.

### **Book Bearer (BB)**

1. The Book Bearer walks behind the two Acolytes in the procession with *hands folded*. See the **Entrance Procession Diagram** on page 13.

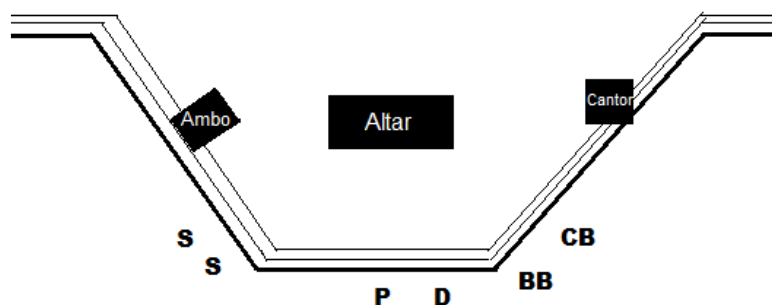
2. When you arrive at the base of the stairs of the altar, move to the right and face the altar while waiting until the rest of the ministers arrive at the altar. See the **Sanctuary Diagram** on page 13.

3. With the priest, first turn toward the Tabernacle and genuflect, then to the altar and bow. Then move with *hands folded* move to your place in the sanctuary on the right and *stand* at your seat.
4. Near the end of the *Gloria*, (wait to hear the words “**For you alone are the Holy One**”) and/or at the priest’s signaling, pick up the Missal walk to the priest and holds the Missal. When the priest finishes and all say AMEN and sit down. The Gloria is not prayed or sung during Advent nor Lent.
5. After the homily, the priest returns to the chair. Wait a moment for reflection, then, with *hands folded*, walk to the priest. He will hand you the binder to hold for the Creed and the Intercessions. When the Intercessions are finished, hand the binder back to the priest and return to your seat with *hands folded*.
6. After the priest goes to distribute Communion, bring any ciboria lids to the left of the Tabernacle and bring the Missal back to the Missal stand.
7. When the priest stands after the Communion Rite, bring the Missal to him for the Closing Prayer.
8. At the end of Mass, wait until the priest moves to kiss the altar and move with *hands folded* to right in from the Candles and Cross, facing the altar. When the priest bows toward the altar and genuflects toward the Tabernacle, do the same, then follow the Cross to the back of the church.



## Entrance Procession & Sanctuary Diagram

Thurifer (Solemn Procession)  
 -  
 Acolyte----Cross Bearer----Acolyte  
 -  
 Book Bearer  
 -  
 Priest----Deacon



## Recessional Diagram

Priest----Deacon  
 -  
 Book Bearer  
 -  
 Acolyte----Cross Bearer----Acolyte

## Seasonal Color Guide

Advent- Violet  
 Christmas Season- White  
 Ordinary Time- Green  
 Lent- Violet  
 Easter Season- White  
 Ordinary Time- Green  
 -----  
 Pentecost- Red  
 Good Friday- Red  
 Weddings- White  
 Funerals- White

### Altar Server's Prayer Before Mass

Inspire my mouth, O Lord, to bless Your Holy Name.

Cleanse my heart from all evil and distracting thoughts.

Enlighten my understanding and inflame my will that I may serve worthily at Your Holy Altar.

O Mary, Mother of Christ, obtain for me the most important grace of knowing my vocation in life. Grant me a true spirit of faith and humble obedience so that I may ever behold the priest as a representative of God and willingly follow him in the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Christ.

Amen.

### Altar Server's Prayer After Mass

O Lord, Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest, I thank you for the privilege of having served at the holy altar of Your Sacrifice.

Now, as I put aside the garments of your service, I ask that I may at all times think of You.

May I ever seek You and find You; may I always follow You;  
may your priestly spirit be in my heart and Your Holy Name on my lips;  
and to Your Praise and Glory may every work of mine be done.

Ever ready in Your Service,  
may I always know and do Your Will in all things and,  
by Your Grace, persevere unto the end.

Amen.



St. Thomas More, pray for us.