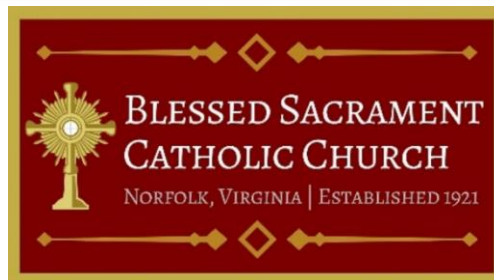


# Altar Server Manual



Revised September 2023

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## Welcome

As the Liturgical Coordinator at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, I would first like to thank you for your willingness to serve at the altar of our Lord for our parish. This is a great opportunity for you to learn about the liturgy of our Church, provide service to the priest and deacon, and actively participate in our Catholic faith. This manual serves as only a part of your training, but it should give you a foundational understanding of:

- ✧ What being an altar server really means.
- ✧ Your responsibilities as an altar server.
- ✧ Terminology used in the Church and during the sacrifice of the Mass.
- ✧ Parts of the Mass and the altar servers' roles within it.

People have been known to say that the Mass is “boring.” If we as Catholics don't pay attention and understand everything that is happening, that may be the case. Just think about how “boring” a football game, a music concert, or a boardgame would be if you didn't know what truly was occurring. Thus, it is the goal of this altar server training to help you understand the great mystery of the Sacrifice of the Mass, given to us by Christ, to serve more fully at His altar.

While this manual contains a wealth of information, there is no substitute for actually serving at the Mass. During your altar server training, you will get the opportunity to learn the different roles an altar server may need to fill at any given liturgy. As you start to serve at the altar of the Lord more often, you may graduate to more advanced roles!

It is important, therefore, to remember that serving for the Eucharistic Liturgy is a privilege and an honor for everyone who serves:thurifers, crucifers, book-bearers, and candle-bearers alike. As an Altar Server, the ministry reflects your Baptismal calling to become more Christ-like. Therefore, your service demands that you strive to imitate the Lord in the way that you act both inside and outside the church proper. Parishioners look to you as an example of reverence and solemnity during liturgies and other occasions. Take this opportunity as a servant of our Lord at the altar to practice growing in holiness on a regular basis:

- ✧ Attend Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, regardless of whether you are assigned to serve or not.
- ✧ Continue to develop your relationship with Jesus Christ through communal and personal prayer. It is important for us as Catholics to develop a relationship built on a commitment to knowing and loving God on a personal level.
- ✧ Whenever you come to the Mass, you should check and see if you can be of any assistance!

As you grow older and begin considering what you might want to do with your life, I hope that you will consider how you could best serve our Lord by serving others: the Priesthood, religious life, married life, or consecrated single life. We are each called by God to a Vocation and it's important that we keep our hearts and minds open as to how He might be calling. The more we commit ourselves to developing our relationship with God and His people, the more likely we are to discover His will for our lives.

St. Tarcisius, Patron Saint of altar servers... pray for us!  
Mr. Michael D. Kostick

## What Does it Mean to be an Altar Server?

Serving at the Altar of our Lord at the Mass is a great privilege and honor. It is an important liturgical ministry for our parish. Each time you serve at the Mass, you are helping the priest bring Jesus Christ to your fellow parishioners through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### What Altar Service Is

- ✧ It is joyful – you are serving the Lord at the most important event in human life!
- ✧ It is a mystery – we may not truly understand what we are doing trust the words of Christ!
- ✧ It is the protecting the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist – Christ willingly gave us His Body to free us from sin. Read John 6:22-59!
- ✧ It is serving at the Last Supper – you are serving Christ and his disciples at the Last Supper during every Mass.
- ✧ It is a communal gathering in an eternal crowd – we serve at the Mass with all the angels Saints throughout human history!

### What Altar Service Is Not

- ✧ It is not mandatory – this is an invited opportunity to serve the Lord!
- ✧ It is not boring – all of the actions and preparations we make at the altar are allowing us to share in Christ's eternal sacrifice!
- ✧ It is not time to socialize – while the Mass is a communal service, it is time for reverence of our Lord!
- ✧ It is not perfect service – just like the Saints before us, we all make mistakes. Do your best to learn from those mistakes!
- ✧ It is not the gym or the beach – dress appropriately for serving God at the crucifixion!



## Responsibility of Altar Servers

Remember you are an example to the rest of the parish of service to the Church. You should act responsibly before, during, and after Mass. Here are some things you should think about when serving at the altar of our Lord:

- ⦿ Punctuality – Arrive **15 minutes before Mass starts!** There is a lot happening before Mass to prepare for the Sacrifice and Celebration. Ask your parents to leave earlier for Mass so that you all can be there on time.
- ⦿ Dress appropriately
  - ✘ Closed-toed dress shoes (no sandals, heeled shoes, sneakers, or work boots).
  - ✘ Boys: dress pants (no shorts); Girls: dress pants or dresses/skirts that are at least knee length (no miniskirts).
  - ✘ Long hair should be pulled back into a bun or a ponytail.
  - ✘ Choose a proper fitting cassock & surplice from the server sacristy.
- ⦿ Check in prior to Mass – If you are not scheduled, check and see if help is needed!
- ⦿ Be a team player – assist younger and newer servers.
- ⦿ Ensure all candles are lit for Mass using the candle lighter/snuffer:
  - ✘ Tabernacle/high altar
  - ✘ Ambo
  - ✘ Altar
  - ✘ Paschal candle (during Eastertime and Baptisms)
  - ✘ Advent wreath (during Advent)
- ⦿ Show reverence and be an example during Mass
  - ✘ Genuflect, bow, and stand when appropriate.
  - ✘ Keep your hands folded in prayer at all times.
  - ✘ Pray the responses out loud (i.e., Gloria, Nicene Creed, Our Father).
  - ✘ Always pay attention to the priest and deacon to respond to any help they may need.
  - ✘ *Act like Christ is on the altar with you – He is!!!*
- ⦿ Become familiar with the “Order of the Mass” and know your role during each section – **YOU** have a vitally important role in the liturgy.
- ⦿ After Mass make sure the sanctuary is ready for the next Mass
  - ✘ Extinguish the candles using the candle lighter/snuffer.
  - ✘ Neatly hang up your cassock and surplice on the correct hangers in the server sacristy.
- ⦿ Before you leave, ask those in charge if there is anything else they need.
- ⦿ Take your assigned Mass as an opportunity to come closer to Jesus Christ!

## Proper Gestures of Altar Servers

Throughout the Mass, all your gestures should be an example to the rest of the parishioners. Make sure to move purposely and reverently. By moving gracefully, you will not bring attention to yourself and allow the parishioners to focus on the Mass itself.

- ♀ **Prayer Hands** – In the sanctuary, it’s important to have unity in posture and prayer.
  - ✘ Palm against palm.
  - ✘ Thumb over the left to form an “x” or cross.
  - ✘ Elbows close to the body.
- ♀ **Genuflection** – Right knee bent down to the ground, with a straight back and prayer hands. If you are holding the thurible, processional crucifix, or processional candles, you will give a head bow. Genuflection is always directed towards the Tabernacle.
- ♀ **Bowing** – A bow shows reverence and honor. A deep bow is done at the hips and is directed towards the altar, priest, or before Holy Communion. A head bow is done at times it would be unsafe to give a full bow (i.e., holding candles/Crucifix/Thurible). Head bows are also done, at the mention of name of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and any Saint being honored at the Mass.
- ♀ **Sitting** – Upright posture with both feet together and with hands face down on legs. Remember to slowly sit and not flop into the chair.
- ♀ **Standing** – Upright posture with both feet together and prayer hands. Avoid locking your knees in place.
- ♀ **Walking & Climbing Stairs** – Upright posture with head held high. Move gracefully and smoothly. Your confidence will make your actions appear deliberate. Never rush/jump stairs. When you must move swiftly, always remember to be in unison with the other altar servers. When necessary, take time to be in unison, especially before entering the sanctuary.
- ♀ **Kneeling** – Upright posture with prayer hands. Remember to pull the cassock up above your shoes so you don’t trip when standing up.
- ♀ **Focused Attention** – Focus your attention on the person speaking (readings, homily, intercessions, etc.) or towards the Celebrant/Altar throughout the Mass. Do not glance around at anything else going on in the congregation. If you have difficulty focusing your attention, pick one thing on the Altar to focus on and say a prayer.
- ♀ **Praying & Singing** – Recite the prayers and sing the hymns so that you are leading by example. If you don’t know all the prayers by heart, use the sheet in the hymnal rack in your pews. Challenge yourself to memorize the communal prayers of the Mass.



## Liturgical Terminology

Here is basic information you need to serve at the altar of our Lord during the Mass. There is still much more information beyond this manual for special Masses and other ceremonies that altar servers will need to know to perform their duties. Once you have mastered these basic procedures, you may be asked to help at special liturgies throughout the year. As in any activity, it is important to know the layout of the altar area, basic names of items, terms, and definitions important to the altar servers.

### Altar Server Roles

- ☩ **Thurifer** – The thurifer is in charge of the thurible during the Mass or rite.
- ☩ **Crucifer** – The crucifer is tasked with carrying the processional crucifix for any procession. The processional crucifix should be held as high as possible to symbolize the importance of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross during His Passion.
- ☩ **Candle-bearer** – These altar servers carry the light of Christ by carrying lit candles in procession or when holding them during the proclamation of the Gospel.
- ☩ **Book-bearer** – The book-bearer has an important role to play in holding the Roman Missal or ceremonial binder for the priest. By holding these liturgical books, the priest is able to use both hands during blessings or special rites.

### Liturgical Roles

- ☩ **Priest** – The priest is the presider of the Mass. He has been ordained by a Bishop and has received faculties to consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. During the Mass, the priest serves as Christ himself.
- ☩ **Concelebrant** – A concelebrant is a priest who is not the main presider of the Mass.
- ☩ **Deacon** – A deacon has been ordained by a Bishop to assist the priest in serving the spiritual needs of the parish. A deacon is able to celebrate certain sacraments in place of a priest (i.e., weddings and baptisms) but does not have priestly faculties.
- ☩ **Master of Ceremony (a.k.a. MC)** – A role filled by a priest, deacon, altar server, or lay person to direct altar servers and other ministers during special Masses or rites. The MC knows the Mass from start to finish and helps the liturgy run smoothly.
- ☩ **Lector** – A person from the congregation who reads the Word of God during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings.
- ☩ **Cantor** – A person from the congregation who leads the parish in singing/chanting hymns and the responsorial psalms.
- ☩ **Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion** – Lay faithful who are commissioned by the parish to assist the priest and deacon in distributing the precious Body and Blood of Christ if there are more people at Mass than they can handle in timely manner.
- ☩ **Sacristan** – This individual's duty is to prepare the vessels and vestments for the Mass. They are also in charge of making sure that all liturgical ministers are present or replacements have been assigned.
- ☩ **Lay Faithful** – The people of the congregation who are not ordained clergy and do not have a specified role during the Mass. Every person in the Church is an important member. The Mass is a communal gathering!



## Liturgical Vestments

- ☉ **Alb** – The white robe that is worn during the Mass by the priest and deacon. The white garment serves as a reminder of baptism and purity.



- ☉ **Cassock** – The full-length black robe worn by priests, seminarians, and altar servers that symbolizes their priestly work and death of self.

- ☉ **Cincture** – Long corded rope that is used for tying the alb at the waist. This useful tool also symbolizes purity.



- ☉ **Chasuble** – The outermost garment worn by the priest. Different colors are used to symbolize the mystery or liturgical season being celebrated (see pg. 10).

- ☉ **Cope** – A long cape, used in certain rituals outside Mass, including Eucharistic adoration and benediction.





☉ **Dalmatic** – The outermost vestment of the deacon. Unlike the priest’s chasuble, the dalmatic has wide sleeves. Similar to the chasuble, different colors are used to symbolize the mystery or liturgical season being celebrated.

☉ **Humeral Veil** – A special long thin veil that goes over the shoulders of the priest before he gives benediction or before he handles the Blessed Sacrament. It has hand pockets for him to place his hands inside it. It is a reminder that the blessing of benediction comes from Christ Himself in the Eucharist, not from the priest.



☉ **Stole** – The long scarf-shaped neck garment worn by the priest during Mass, confession, baptism, and other sacraments, symbolizing the authority that Christ has given Him to bring His Body and Blood present, to forgive sins in the name and person of Christ, and to baptize new members into the Church. A deacon’s stole is worn across their body.

☉ **Surplice** – The white wide-sleeved garment worn over the cassock. Just like the alb, it also symbolizes baptism.



## Liturgical Colors and Seasons

Different colors are used to symbolize the mystery or liturgical season being celebrated.

- ✧ **Green** – Worn on all Sundays of Ordinary Time, the color green represents the Holy Spirit, life, eternity, and hope.
- ✧ **White/Gold** – Known for representing innocence, purity, joy, triumph, and glory, you will see this color during celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, All Saints' Day, and marriage ceremonies.
- ✧ **Violet/Purple** – You will see this color on Sundays of Advent and Lent, and whenever a priest performs the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.
- ✧ **Rose** – Rose vestments are only worn twice in the liturgical year, during the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete) and the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare). This color is worn on these days to show the joy and love in Christ. They are to remind Catholics of the joy in the times of penance and worship.
- ✧ **Red** – This bold color signifies passion, blood, fire, God's love, and Jesus' suffering. It is most typically worn on Palm Sunday, Pentecost, feast days of Martyrs, and when the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred.
- ✧ **Black** – Black vestments are meant to reflect the mourning felt by those at the funerals and stand as a reminder to pray for the soul of the departed. Black is the standard color for the clergy's everyday clothes. It is meant to symbolize humility and sacrifice of clerical life.



## Liturgical Vessels

- ☩ **Chalice** – The cup used to hold the wine that is transformed into the Precious Blood of Christ. The priest's chalice is usually made out of gold or silver, or some other precious metals, and it is beautifully crafted to remind us that what is inside is the most precious thing we have in this life: Christ's own Blood.



- ☩ **Ciborium** – The cup-like vessel used for distributing the Host at Communion and to hold the Blessed Sacrament within the Tabernacle. When pluralized, they are called Ciboria.

- ☩ **Cruets** – The pitcher-like vessels containing water used for consecration and washing of the priest's hands. When a cruet is used to hold wine, it is known as a flagon or decanter.



- ☩ **Lavabo/Ablution Bowl** – The bowl in which the priest washes his hands before Consecration or after distribution of the Eucharist at Communion.

- ☩ **Monstrance** – a large, ornate display shaped like a Cross and usually made of gold. It is designed to bring attention to the Blessed Sacrament, which is held in a see-through glass case (called a Luna), so we can see Our Lord in His sacramental form.



- ☩ **Paten** – The metal plate upon which the host is placed upon the altar for consecration.

- ✧ **Pyx** – The metal case used by priests and extraordinary ministers to carry Communion to the sick.



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## Liturgical Linens

- ✧ **Corporal** – Square piece of white cloth that is unfolded in a specific pattern and placed on the center of the altar so that any crumbs and fragments of the Host are not lost.



- ✧ **Finger Towel** – The small towel used by the priest to dry his hands after they are washed following the Offertory.

- ✧ **Pall** – The stiff square-shaped white cover placed over the chalice to protect its contents.



- ✧ **Purificator** – A tri-folded white rectangular cloth. It is used to cover the chalice when moving to avoid spilling the Precious blood and for wiping the chalice and paten clean.

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## Liturgical Tools

- ✧ **Aspergillum** – Also called a holy water sprinkler. It has a perforated end that holds holy water for the priest to sprinkle on sacramentals or people to bless them.





☩ **Aspersorium** – A bucket containing holy water used for the sprinkling rites.

☩ **Consecration Bells** – The four small bells attached to a single handle that is rung during the epiclesis, the elevation of the Body and Blood of Christ at the consecration, and to signify the lay faithful to receive the Eucharist.



☩ **Incense Boat** – A small metal container that holds incense. It has a cover and comes with a small spoon. It is shaped like a little boat to symbolize the ship of St. Peter.

☩ **Processional Crucifix** – The image of Jesus crucified nailed to the Cross is a reminder of what the Mass is about: we enter into the mystery of Jesus' suffering, death, and Resurrection, and we receive the fruits and merits of His Passion.



☩ **Candle Lighter/Snuffer** – used to light and extinguish candles. It has a long pole, and contains a long, retractable wick. One side holds the wick, the other holds the bell shaped 'snuffer.'

☩ **Thurible or Censer** – The metal container on a chain that holds burning charcoal and incense for Mass and other ceremonies.



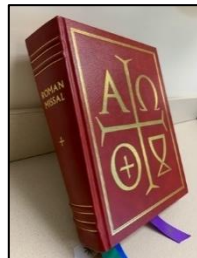
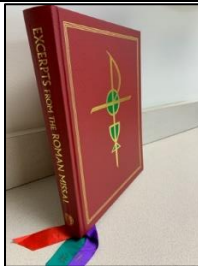
## Liturgical Books

- ☉ **Book of the Gospels** – The large book that contains only the Gospel readings used during the Mass on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation, and funerals.



- ☉ **Ceremonial Binder** – These binders are used by the priest or deacon during the Mass when special instructions or rites are used. Their colors match those of the liturgical vestments of the day.

- ☉ **Lectionary** – The large book of scripture readings for each day of the liturgical year and special feast days. The lectionary also contains the Gospel readings. There are specific lectionaries for weekday cycles and weekend cycles.



- ☉ **Roman Missal** – The book of prayers used by the priest during the Mass. It is also called the Sacramentary.

## Fitments of Importance

- ☉ **Altar** – The table where Mass is celebrated. Christ sacrifices his own Body and Blood here through His priest. The altar is also a symbol of Christ; therefore, when entering the sanctuary, you should bow in reverence. It is centrally located in the Sanctuary.





☪ **Ambo** – The stand where the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel, the lectors proclaim the scripture readings, and the cantor proclaims the psalm. It is located in the Sanctuary.

☪ **Ambry** – The cabinet where the Holy Oils are kept for use during special rites. These oils are the Oil of the Infirm, the Oil of the Catechumens, and the Holy Chrism. It is located in the back of the Nave.



☪ **Baptismal Font** – The large basin that holds holy water, where people are baptized. The baptismal font is kept near the entrance on purpose, as the Sacrament of Baptism is the "door to the Church."

☪ **Credence Tables** – The tables at the back of the sanctuary. One table holds the liturgical vessels, the other holds the Roman Missal and stand.



☪ **Presider's Chair** – The presider's chair symbolizes the priest. He doesn't just sit there. He stands there to lead the assembly in prayer. He stands at the chair for the opening rites, sits in the chair for the Scripture readings and may stand at the chair again for the communion prayer and concluding rites.



- ✧ **Offertory Table** – The table, located near the baptismal font at the back of the Nave, used for holding the unconsecrated host and wine to be presented during the Offertory at Mass.



- ✧ **Tabernacle** – A locked repository in which the Eucharist is stored. Because it holds the consecrated Body of Christ, you should genuflect when passing directly in front of it.

## Areas of the Church

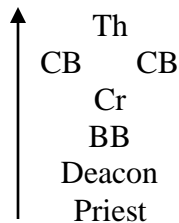
The Church proper (the building) contains specific areas that serve different purposes. It will be helpful for you to learn these areas to help prepare for the Mass.

- ✧ **Narthex** (a.k.a. Vestibule, Great Hall) – At our church, this is the area separating the breezeway from the nave. The Narthex symbolizes the journey from our everyday lives into our eventual eternal life in Heaven.
- ✧ **Nave** – The area of the church where parishioners participate in the Mass. This area is dedicated to the lay faithful. It is here where parishioners listen to the Word of God and receive Holy Communion.
- ✧ **Sanctuary** – Literally means the “holy place.” In this area of the church is where the priest presides over the Mass. It also contains the Ambo, Altar, and Tabernacle which are used for the Liturgies of the Word and Eucharist, respectively. The sanctuary symbolically separates the lay faithful from the roles of the ordained clergy and the liturgical ministers at the sanctuary steps.
- ✧ **Vesting Sacristy** – The room where the priests and deacons put on their vestments before Mass. All of the chasubles, dalmatics, stoles, copes, and humeral veils can be found in the vesting sacristy. At our church, this sacristy is in the back of the Narthex by the nursery.
- ✧ **Working Sacristy** – Where the sacristan prepares the liturgical vessels, unconsecrated hosts, and thurible before Mass. The working sacristy also contains the “sacrarium,” which is a special sink that drains directly into the ground. At our church, the working sacristy is next to the vesting sacristy by the nursery.
- ✧ **Server Sacristy** (a.k.a. the Flower Room) – Contains the vestments for the altar servers. At our church, it is located in the narthex.

## Parts of the Mass

### Entrance

- ◊ Gather in the Narthex with the priest (and deacon)
- ◊ The order of the procession is as follows:
  - ✘ Thurifer (with thurible and boat)<sup>1</sup>
  - ✘ Candle-bearers with altar candles
  - ✘ Crucifer with processional crucifix
  - ✘ Book-bearer and additional servers (if needed) with hands folded
  - ✘ Deacon (or 1<sup>st</sup> lector) with the Book of the Gospels
  - ✘ Presiding priest<sup>2</sup>



- ◊ CUE – When the first verse of the processional hymn is sung, the thurifer/candle-bearers may begin the procession slowly. *It is not a race!* The crucifer should raise the processional cross as high as possible.
- ◊ When arriving at the sanctuary...
  - ✘ \*The thurifer bows to the Tabernacle on their own, then walks to the side of the altar in front of the presider’s chair and waits for the priest and deacon. The thurifer remains at this position for the incensing of the altar, crucifix, and Paschal candle (during Easter Time) or Nativity (during Christmas Time). After receiving the thurible from the priest or deacon, the thurifer will hang the thurible on its stand and sit in the 3<sup>rd</sup> altar server pew.
  - ✘ The candle-bearers stop at the front of the pews and modesty screens and wait for the priest to genuflect. At the same time, they bow their heads to the Tabernacle and place their candles at the front corners of the altar. Afterwards they go directly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> altar server pew.
  - ✘ The crucifer turns left and stands at the end of the front pew and modesty screen and waits for the priest to genuflect. At the same time, they bow their head to the Tabernacle together with the other altar servers. Next, the crucifer places the processional cross on its stand behind the altar servers’ pews and goes directly to the 1<sup>st</sup> altar server pew.
  - ✘ The book-bearer (and additional servers) walks in front of the candle-bearer on the right side, stands in front of the modesty screen and waits for the priest to genuflect. At the same time, they genuflect to the Tabernacle together with the other altar servers and go directly to the 3<sup>rd</sup> altar server pew.

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<sup>1</sup> If incense is not being used, there will not be a thurifer

<sup>2</sup> If there are concelebrating priests, they will precede the presiding priest in the procession



### Greeting, Penitential Rite, Gloria, and Collect

- ✧ Immediately after reaching the pew, the book-bearer will pick up the presider's ceremonial binder, bow to the altar, and stand in front of the priest with the binder. Make sure to stand so you do not block his view of the parishioners; if you are taller than him you should stand to the side.
- ✧ After the greeting, the priest or deacon will recite the penitential rite (Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy). CUE – Then, when the Gloria is recited (except during Lent), the book-bearer will then head toward the pew, bow to the altar, and switch the ceremonial binder with the Roman Missal.
- ✧ CUE – “You alone... You alone... You alone.” (or “Let us pray” during Lent) The book-bearer will take the open Roman Missal up to the priest. When the priest has finished the Collect, close the Roman Missal, bow to the altar, and return to your pew.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, Responsorial Psalm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, and Gospel

- ✧ \*CUE – At the beginning of the Gospel acclamation (“Alleluia” or “Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ”) the thurifer will take the thurible and boat, bow to the altar, and stand in front of the priest at the presider's chair. The priest will place incense in the thurible and bless it. The thurifer will then lead the priest or deacon to the Book of the Gospels, wait for him to bless the people, and lead him finally to the ambo and stand behind him.
- ✧ \*CUE – “A reading from the holy Gospel according to...” The thurifer hands the thurible to the priest or deacon for him to incense the Book of the Gospels. The priest will then return the thurible to the thurifer. The thurifer will lightly swing the thurible throughout the proclamation of the Gospel. Once the Gospel is finished and the Book of the Gospels has been placed on the Ambo stand, the thurifer will walk around the front of the sanctuary steps, stopping to bow to the altar when passing at the center of the nave, to return the thurible to its stand.

### Homily, Creed, and Universal Prayer

- ✧ CUE – After the homily, the book-bearer picks up the ceremonial binder, bows to the altar, and holds the ceremonial binder for the priest until the concluding blessing of the universal prayer. When the priest finishes the blessing, the book-bearer hands the ceremonial binder to the priest and then will lead the candle-bearers in preparing the altar.

## Offertory

- ◊ After the universal prayer...
  - ✘ The crucifer takes the processional crucifix to the back of the Nave.
    - ◊ **CUE** – When the priest and deacon stand up after the altar has been prepared, the crucifer will begin the procession with the offertory gifts.
    - ◊ When in front of the priest the crucifer will bow their head to the altar, return the processional crucifix to its stand, and go back to their pew.
  - ✘ The candle-bearers go to the credence tables and take turns bringing the deacon or priest the following items in order.
    - ◊ Corporal
    - ◊ Missal stand
    - ◊ Roman Missal
    - ◊ Chalice with purificator and pall
    - ◊ Ciboria with unconsecrated hosts
    - ◊ Pyx plate and silver bowl with low-gluten host
    - ◊ Cruet filled with water
  - ✘ Once the altar is prepared, the book-bearer will join the priest and deacon to receive the offertory gifts from the gift-bearers. Once the gifts have been received, the book-bearer remains at the altar to collect the cruet and empty flagon from the priest or deacon.
  - ✘ The candle-bearers will prepare the lavabo bowl and finger towel. One will hold the cruet of water, the other will hold the lavabo bowl and drape the opened finger towel over their left arm.

## Prayer over the Offerings

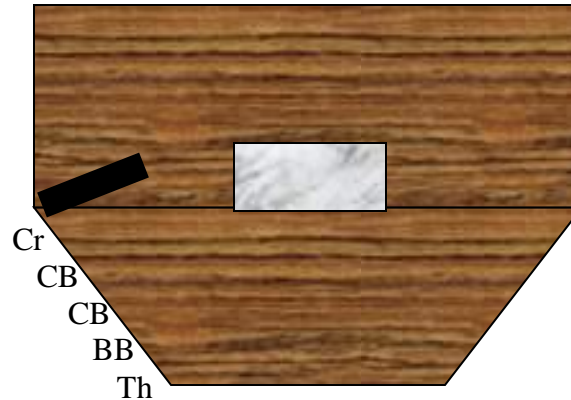
- ◊ \*The thurifer will bring the thurible and boat to the priest at the altar. The priest will place incense in the thurible and bless it. The thurifer remains at this position for the incensing of the altar, crucifix, and Paschal candle (during Easter Time). The priest will hand the thurible to the deacon to bless the priest and the congregants.<sup>3</sup> Once the thurible is done being used, it will be returned to the thurifer and can be placed back on the thurible stand.
- ◊ **CUE** – When the priest kneels after the blessing of the gifts, the candle-bearers will bring the lavabo bowl, finger towel, and cruet to the side of the altar.
- ◊ Place the lavabo bowl under the priest's hand and lightly pour water over his fingers until he nods. Then extend the arm with the finger towel and allow the priest to dry his hands. He will place the towel back on your arm.
- ◊ Bow to the priest then return the items back to the credence table and place them on the tray underneath the table.
- ◊ When returning to the pews, bow to the altar.

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<sup>3</sup> If there is not a deacon present, the thurifer will bow to the priest, incense him by swinging the censor twice straight ahead, twice to the left, and twice to the right, and bowing to him again. Afterwards the thurifer will move to the front of the altar and do the same process for the congregants (bow, twice to the front, twice to the left, twice to the right, bow).

## Eucharistic Prayer

- ◊ CUE – “Holy, Holy, Holy...” (or “*Sanctus...*”) When the *Sanctus* is started, all altar servers will walk to the diagonal portion of the altar and stand at the base of the sanctuary steps in front of their pews together. When the *Sanctus* is finished, servers will kneel on the bottom step. When you kneel, remember to pull the cassock up above your shoes so you don’t trip when standing up.



- ◊ CUE – When the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine (known as the *epiclesis*), the crucifer will ring the consecration bells with one confident shake and let the bells resonate until they can’t be heard anymore.
- ◊ CUE – “... My Body... do this in remembrance of Me.” As the priest raises the host during the transubstantiation, the crucifer will ring the consecration bells three times (3-second shake, 1-second pause, 3-second shake, 1-second pause, 3-second shake). Let the bells resonate until they can’t be heard anymore.
- ◊ CUE – “... My Blood... do this in remembrance of Me.” As the priest raises the chalice during the transubstantiation, again the crucifer will ring the consecration bells three times (3-second shake, 1-second pause, 3-second shake, 1-second pause, 3-second shake). Let the bells resonate until they can’t be heard anymore.

## Lord’s Prayer, Sign of Peace, Lamb of God, Holy Communion

- ◊ CUE – After the Great Amen, servers will stand for the Lord’s Prayer and Sign of Peace.
- ◊ During the Sign of Peace, it is proper to bow your head to the other servers.
- ◊ CUE – “... grant us peace (*dona nobis pacem*).” Servers kneel again.
- ◊ CUE – Once the priest has finished consuming the blood from the chalice, the crucifer will ring the consecration bells with one confident shake.
- ◊ All altar servers will stand and move to the top sanctuary step to receive Holy Communion. Bow in reverence to the Blessed Sacrament.
  - ✘ If you are receiving the Precious Body on the tongue, extend your tongue out with hand folded in prayer so that the priest can place the Blessed Sacrament on your tongue.
  - ✘ If you are receiving the Precious Body in the hand, extend your hands all the way to the ciborium.
  - ✘ If you are not receiving the Precious Blood, cross your arms over your chest and shoulders to signify to the priest or deacon.

- ⦿ After receiving Holy Communion, say “Amen,” make the sign of the Cross, and wait at the steps until the priest, deacon, and extraordinary minister(s) of Holy Communion move from the altar to distribute the Blessed Sacrament. At that time all the altar servers will move to the altar.
  - ✘ The crucifer<sup>4</sup> will distribute the vessels to the book-bearer and candle-bearers. If there is a ciborium with consecrated hosts left on the altar, they will make sure that a pall is placed over top.
  - ✘ They will then hand the remaining vessels, books, and linens to the book-bearer and candle-bearers to return to the correct credence tables. Make sure all sacred vessels are placed on top of the corporal on the credence table!
  - ✘ The crucifer will remain at the altar during the distribution of Holy Communion and collect the ciboria/patens from the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, making sure to carefully place the remaining hosts in the ciborium upon the altar.
- ⦿ Once the liturgical books and empty vessels have been brought back to the credence tables, the book-bearer and candle-bearers will stay at the vessels credence table until the final row of parishioners has entered the line to receive Holy Communion.
  - ✘ The book-bearer will stand behind the presider’s chair with an ablution bowl in their hands and finger towel over their arm for the priest. When the Tabernacle is closed, they will bow their heads in reverence. Once the priest has dried his hands, the ablution bowl may be placed back on its table and the book-bearer will bow to the altar return to their pew to prepare the Missal for the Prayer after Communion.
  - ✘ The candle-bearers will go to the credence table with the liturgical vessels to help dry the vessels after purification. When the Tabernacle is closed, they will genuflect in reverence. After the vessels have been dried, they will bow to the altar and return to their pews.
  - ✘ The crucifer will go the altar. When the Tabernacle is closed, they will genuflect in reverence. Once the priest and deacon have taken the Ciborium containing the Blessed Sacrament back to the tabernacle, the crucifer will fold the corporal (up, down, side, side) and return it to the Missal credence table. Once they are finished, they will go to Altar and pick up the pyx plate for the EMHC to the sick and homebound.

### **Dismissal of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound**

- ⦿ The crucifer will go to the top of the sanctuary steps with the priest or deacon and hold the pyx plate for the EMHC’s to collect their pyx. They will stay until the EMHC’s are dismissed, then they may place the pyx plate back on the altar and return to their pew.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> If there is a thurifer, they will assist in this position throughout the entirety of distribution of Holy Communion.

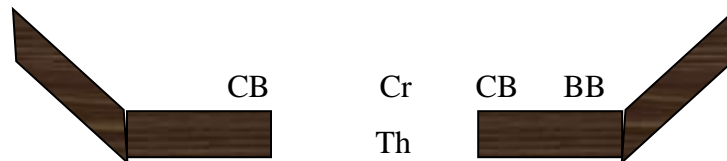
<sup>5</sup> If there are no EMHC to the Sick and Homebound, this step will be omitted.

## Prayer after Communion

- ☉ CUE – “Let us pray.” The book-bearer carries the Roman Missal to the priest and holds it for him during the prayer after communion. If there is a solemn blessing, the Missal will be used after the prayer. The Missal should be held until the priest closes it. The book-bearer bows to the altar and returns to the pew with the Missal.

## Recessional

- ☉ CUE – When the recessional hymn music begins to play, all altar servers should retrieve their liturgical tools and make their way to their places for the recessional, facing the altar.
  - ✕ \*The thurifer takes the thurible and boat to the center aisle, two pews back in the nave.
  - ✕ The crucifer takes the processional crucifix to the first set of pews in the nave.
  - ✕ The candle-bearers bow to the altar, retrieve the candles off the altar, and move in front of the modesty screens in the same position as in the processional.
  - ✕ The book-bearer (and any additional servers) will stand next to the candle-bearers, in the same positions as in the processional.



- ☉ CUE – When the priest and deacon genuflect to the Tabernacle, the thurifer, crucifer, and candle-bearers will bow their heads and the book-bearer (and any additional servers) will genuflect to the Tabernacle at the same time. All turn to recess down the middle aisle of the nave.
- ☉ Once in the Narthex, the altar servers will stand at the front of the carpeted area and receive a blessing from priest.
  - ✕ \*The thurifer empties the charcoal from the thurible into the repository outside the vesting sacristy and returns the thurible to the working sacristy.
  - ✕ The crucifer returns the processional crucifix to its wall hanger in the narthex.
  - ✕ The candle-bearers extinguish their processional candles and place them on the altar in the narthex.
  - ✕ The book-bearer waits for the recessional hymn to finish before going to extinguish the candles in the sanctuary.
- ☉ All cassocks and surplices should be neatly hung on the correct hangers for the next altar servers to use.





## Altar Server Contract

I have read this manual and understand the honor and responsibility that I am undertaking as an altar server for Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. I agree to abide by the following expectations and guidelines:

- ✧ I understand that I will be scheduled to serve and that if I can't serve, I will find a substitute to serve for me through Ministry Scheduler Pro.
- ✧ I understand that special Masses and services (i.e., Christmas Eve, Holy Triduum, Holy Days of Obligation) may not be scheduled and that I will need to sign up if I wish to serve.
- ✧ I will follow the guidelines outlined in the Altar Server Manual and addressed in training.
- ✧ I will dress for the Mass in accordance with the Altar Server Manual.
- ✧ I will arrive at church **at least 15 minutes before the Mass.**
- ✧ I understand that it is my responsibility to sign in before the Mass.
- ✧ I will show reverence in the church at all times, giving a good example to all who see me.
- ✧ I will use prayer hands when standing and kneeling.
- ✧ I will sit quietly with hands folded in my lap when seated.
- ✧ I will move smoothly and reverently.
- ✧ I will not talk during Mass unless necessary.
- ✧ I will know and say the appropriate responses throughout the Mass.
- ✧ I will be attentive to the priest and deacon during Mass.
- ✧ I will work together as a team with my fellow altar servers.
- ✧ After Mass, I will hang up my cassock and surplice neatly on their hangers and return them to their proper place in the server sacristy.
- ✧ If I am unable to meet the guidelines and/or follow the expectations as outlined for altar servers, this will be an indication that I no longer wish to serve and will be removed from the active list of altar servers.

Altar Server's Name (Print Clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Altar Server's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardians

- ✧ I understand the manual for my child(ren).
- ✧ I will keep track of my child(ren)'s schedule using Ministry Scheduler Pro.
- ✧ I will make sure to arrive at church **at least 15 minutes before the Mass** so that they can properly prepare for Mass.

Name (Print Clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**(Please return this form to the Parish office or to the Liturgical Coordinator before Mass)**