

Altar Server Guidelines for Serving Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, Austin, TX

1. Altar servers are to arrive at least 20 minutes before mass. If you have not arrived 15 minutes before mass begins, the MC will begin to look for a substitute for you. Once a substitute replaces you, you will not be able to server at that mass.
2. Appropriate Dress is expected.

Expectations:

- Keep in mind an altar server is a public minister of the Church who serves at the altar. *(If servers are not appropriately dressed, they will be asked 'not' to serve.)*
- Tennis shoes or flip flops are not considered proper foot attire. Girl servers need to consider if they can walk without falling when considering the height of their heels.
- Shorts are not considered proper leg attire and a server with shorts on will be asked not to participate in the mass.
- Make sure your alb length is correct.

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3. Check the schedule when it is posted on the website. If you can not serve at your assigned time, you must get a substitute. A roster of servers will be emailed to you at the time the schedule is posted. Use this update list to email and call servers to replace you.

1. Before Mass

First thing, get dressed

The MC will assign duties to all altar servers present.

Participate in the prayer before mass with Father and the lectors.

2. Entrance Procession

After the words to the processional song (hymn) begin, altar servers lead the procession into the church. If incense is used, thurifer (person carrying the incense and boat) leads the procession. Following him/her, the crucifer (person carrying the processional cross) is next. Then, two servers follow carrying processional candles. (Distance between altar servers should be about six feet). If an altar server is in procession and 'not' carrying anything, he/she should walk with their hands folded in a prayerful manner.

- a. The thurifer moves to back edge of the carpet, awaiting for the Priest to enter venerate (kiss) the altar. The crucifer moves and places the processional cross in its stand. Candle bearers place the candles next to the ambo. (Altar servers carry anything in the procession, do 'not' bow to the altar) All other altar servers do make a "full" bow (act of reverence) to the Altar (symbol of Christ).
- b. Once items have been placed in their appropriate location, all proceed to their chairs and remain standing, joining in singing the opening hymn. As the Opening Song concludes, an altar server picks up the Sacramentary (large book with prayers) and stands holding the book for the Priest's Opening Prayer.

3. Opening Prayer (follows after the singing of the Gloria)

Master of Ceremonies (MC) should have the Sacramentary opened up to the appropriate Prayer (ribbons on side of book). Near the end of the Gloria, the server should approach Father with the Sacramentary open. The server should be in place before Father says "Let us Pray."

4. Liturgy of the Word

If incense is used, right after the singing of the Responsorial Psalm, the altar server rises to prepare thurible, boat and incense. He/she stands near the pillar in a ready position.

- a. Gospel Procession
If incense is used, as the community rises with the singing of the 'Alleluia', Thurifer stands in front of Priest, so that incense may be placed on the burning Coals. He/she steps aside, ready to lead the gospel procession.

As preparation of the incense is taking place, candle bearers

proceed to the Ambo and pick up the two candles and wait for the Deacon to receive the Priest's blessing. As the Deacon moves to the Altar to pick up the Gospel Book, the thurifer leads the candle bearers in the gospel procession.)

If no thurifer is involved, then the candle bearers lead the gospel procession. Candle bearers do not begin to move until the Deacon/Priest picks up the Gospel Book and turns towards the candle bearers who are standing at the edge of carpet. Altar servers process slowly to the Ambo. Once arriving at the Ambo, they stand at the front of the Ambo, facing each other with candles at equal height.

When the Deacon/Priest concludes the Gospel and the altar servers join the people in saying "Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ". They place the candles in their base and return to their seats, behind the Priest and Deacon chair. Please walk together with hands folded in a prayerful fashion.

b. After the Homily

After the homily, as everyone stands, server goes to the Priest to hold the liturgical binder for the Profession of Faith and General Intercessions.

5. Preparation of Altar

After the General Intercessions, everyone is seated. The Altar is to be prepared for Eucharist. The server in charge of the Sacramentary places the Sacramentary on the left side of the altar. Four other altar servers go to the credence table. A server gets two (2) corporals (white linen napkin) and open one (1) up on the center of the Altar and one (1) on the right side of the Altar. A Server gets the Presider's chalice, 1 purificator (white cloth to clean the chalice) and water cruet. He/she places the chalice on the center corporal and the water cruet on the right side of the Altar.

The other servers bring the seven (7) chalices and places them on the corporal on the right side of the Altar. Remember these are special vessels and should be carried with reverence. A Server picks up the candle lighter and lights the altar candles from the candles at the Ambo. (Before mass, make sure that there is a wick in the lighter).

All servers are assigned their roles before mass by the MC. There should be

no confusion during the setting of the table about who should be doing what job. One server should be at the altar at a time with the other servers waiting off the carpet.

6. Presentation of the Gifts (Bread, Wine, Treasure)

MC should stand near the back corner of the carpet, Priest rises to receive the Gifts. Three servers stand alongside Priest in front of the Altar. Priest hands one altar server the money offering, which is placed on the table under the crucifix. The ciboria of bread and flagon of wine is given to the altar servers, which is then placed on the Altar. The altar server who placed the flagon of wine on the Altar waits at the back corner of the Altar.

The Deacon will fill all of the chalices with the wine. Deacon will hand the empty flagon (pitcher) to the server. Server waits until the Deacon pours some water into the wine. After the Deacon pours some water into the wine, the Deacon will then hand the water cruet to the server. He/she bows and then takes the cruet and flagon (pitcher) to the credence table.

At this time, three (3) Altar Servers proceed to the credence table. One server gets the lavabo (water bowl). One server gets the hand towel, while the other server gets the water pitcher. All three stand at the side of the Altar at the edge of the carpet. When the Priest turn towards the Servers, they proceed up to him to wash his hands. Server pours plenty of water over his hands. Server with an open towel hands it to the Priest. After the washing of the hands, servers bow to the priest and then return to their respective seats.

7. After Holy Communion

After Holy Communion has been distributed, an Altar Server shall take a candle from the Altar and leads an Extra Ordinary Minister of the Eucharist/Deacon/Priest to the chapel with the remaining consecrated Hosts. Once the server and minister reaches the chapel door, the altar server returns to the main sanctuary.

- a. As this is being done, one server removes the corporals from the Altar and anything else that has been left on the Altar.
- b. Altar server who held the Sacramentary prepares to hold the book for the Prayer after Communion (Solemn Blessing)

8. Recessional

As the recessional song begins, Thurifer (if incense is being used) takes thurible and incense to the Priest. Once prepared, thurifer proceeds to the recessional aisle. Two altar servers take the candles by the Ambo; crucifer takes processional cross; Once the incense, cross and candles are in line, then other altar servers proceed to the recessional aisle with hands folded in a prayerful fashion. . Everyone turns and faces the Altar.

When Priest/Deacon bow to the Altar, altar servers carrying something turn and begin the recessional to exit the sanctuary. Those not carrying anything make a 'profound bow' to the Altar as do the Priest/Deacon.

(Once in the narthex, altar servers return items and garments to its rightful place; place albs on hangars and hang them neatly; Please be sure that anything that needs to be replaced for the next mass has been taken care of).

9. Things to remember

Do not place your foot on the candle stand to remove or place the candle in the base. Place the candle carefully into the base.

Always come to mass prepared to serve. Check in with the MC when you arrive to see if he/she is in need of help.