

Guidelines for Altar Servers at St. Therese

Thank you for your service in the Altar Server Ministry. It is important to realize that you are a very special minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. The entire community of St. Therese de Lisieux Parish is depending on you to perform your duties as an Altar Server with dignity and reverence. May God Bless you and your family for your time and service to the Lord.

This document includes all information needed to fulfill your role as an Altar Server. Read the guidelines every few months or so in order to be sure that you are still doing everything according to procedure. You will be contacted if there are any changes made to the Altar Server guidelines.

Normal rotation allows every server to serve. If you have any questions or concerns that may arise, please contact the Altar Server Coordinator Louis Giannone (Mr. G) at LouisGiannone@gmail.com.

Another way to serve more is to wear appropriate clothing and shoes to every Mass you attend and offer to fill in if a replacement is needed.

The primary role of the altar server is to assist the Priest in the celebration of the liturgy during Mass. This is done through specific actions and by setting an example to the congregation by active participation in the Liturgy (hymns, responses, etc.), by looking alert and sitting or standing at the appropriate times.

Please review the perspective calendar before the final release is out on the website. Schedules will always be up to date on the St. Therese website. It is your responsibility to find a replacement. Please let the Altar Server Coordinator know in advance when your child can not serve due to vacation, sports activity or any other events. This way you will not be scheduled on that particular day.

Standard Appearance and Behavior

- As a reminder, all servers are required to wear appropriate clothing and shoes. Plain, black (preferred) or plain closed toe dress shoes in good, clean condition.
- No flip-flops.

- Be sure your hands are clean.
- Put on Altar Server robe and cincture. The cincture should be the same color as the Altar Table. The Altar Server robe should not be too long or short. Ask for assistance if needed.

Always

- Bow when you pass in front of the Altar and Tabernacle during Mass and any other time.
- Move slowly with reverence and dignity.
- Handle objects solemnly and with reverence.
- When lighting the candle, place the glass cover on the altar table and then light the candle. If you are unable to light the candle please ask for assistance.
- Pay very close attention to what is going on at the altar. Focus your attention on the Priest and Deacon.
- When the Priest is standing at the altar the Servers should also be standing. The only time you should be sitting is when the Priest preaches the homily. Especially when the Priest is purifying the Chalice, the ciborium's, and the cups. Stand by to receive the items so you can put them on the credence table.
- Keep your hands folded at the waist or chest, unless holding something.
- While you are up on the altar, please get involved with praying and singing.
- The ciborium cover will always be on when going from the credence table to the altar table.

No

- No talking while sitting on the altar, please be professional. Everyone is watching. No fiddling with your hair or vestments while seated or standing.
- When standing, stand up straight.
- When seated, sit up straight and still, with your hands folded in your lap, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor.

Before Mass

- Arrive 15 minutes before the beginning of the celebration of the Mass. Get ready for Mass.
- The changing room for Servers will be in the store-room on the left side of the Lectern. Be sure you reverently enter and exit the Sanctuary by genuflecting! If you need assistance with the cinctures please see the assign deacon for the Mass assigned.
- Light the candles if they are not lit. Ask for assistance if needed.
- Go to the Sacristy, sign in and get ready for mass.
- Ask the Priest or Deacon ahead of time if you need to do anything differently for the Mass or Season.
- Decide your role between Altar Server 1 and Altar Server 2. For example: cross-bearer, ringing of the bells. If there is only one server, that server brings all.
- Be Flexible, changes can happen on the fly during the Masses.

The Entrance Procession

- The cross-bearer waits until the words of the song begin (not the music) and then leads the procession of ministers in with the processional cross. Unless instructed differently by the Priest.
- The other server follows, leaving a space of about three paces with hands folded.
- The Cross-Bearer will keep walking, bow their heads when they reach the bottom of the steps, and proceed to the left side of the altar. The server who lines up behind the Cross-Bearer will bow and also go to the left of the altar.
- Once The Priest and Deacon enters the altar to the right the altar servers will be entering to the left between the credence table and the ambo.
- The Cross-Bearer will put the cross on the stand and stay standing by your chair with your hands folded.
- While standing on the altar, hands will always be folded.

Opening Prayer

- After the Gloria, the priest says “Let us pray” (Depending on the season, sometimes there is no Gloria). Once that is complete, all the servers are seated.
- Reading I - Sit
- Responsorial Psalm - Sit
- Reading II - Sit
- Gospel - Stand
- Homily – Sit

(Remember, it is very important to pay attention and to sit quietly during this part of the mass.)

- Profession of Faith - Stand
- Prayer of the Faithful – Stand

Preparation of the Altar and the Presentation of the gifts

(Remember each Mass is different and depending on the season. Be Flexible, changes can happen on the fly. There are no preparation of the gifts for 7:30 and 5:30 mass.)

- At the conclusion of the General Intercession, the assembly will be seated. The Altar servers set the Altar Table for Mass.
- Make sure that the first item brought up is the chalice along with the Ciborium(s), and the 2 Communion Cups with purificators to the altar (If present).

(Remember to take the covers off the cruets when bringing the water and wine to the altar table. Also, do not remove the covers off the ciborium on the credence table they should be removed on the altar table and then returned back to the credence table.)

- When finished, return to your seats and stand ready to join the priest when he goes to receive the gifts. If there are two servers, they stand on either side of the Priest and Deacon; if there is only one server, he or she stand to the Priest’s right side.

- Take the covers of the cruets and bring the water and wine to the Priest. The server who is holding the wine will be by the side of the altar table and the server who holds the water will be by the side of the Tabernacle, and then take it back to the credence table to prepare to assist the Priest in washing his hands.
- Both servers will bow at the same time when proceeding back to the credence table.
- If there is only one server, you can leave the water on the altar table for the washing of the hands.
- At the credence table, the servers stand ready, one with the lavabo bowl in his or her hand and a towel draped over his or her wrist. The other server stands to his or her right, with the cruet of water. When the Priest is ready, the servers approach the priest and the first server holds the bowl under the priest's fingers as the second server pours a small amount of water over his fingers. Stay in place until the priest has dried his hands and then both servers will bow at the same time when proceeding back to the credence table.
- Once the items have been returned to the credence, return to your seats and remain standing with your hands folded.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Kneel for the ringing of the bells for the bread and wine. The server will ring the bells (3x times). Three times is done in honor of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because the elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus the bread and wine we offered has now become the real BODY and BLOOD of our God, Jesus Christ.
- The Lord's Prayer is recited.
- After exchanging the sign of peace with the Priest and Deacon, the servers return to their places waiting to receive Holy Communion.
- After receiving Holy Communion, proceed with the Processional Candlesticks. Stand by until the Priest or Deacon distributes the Cups and the Ciborium's.
- Stand on the middle step by the side of the Priest and Deacon at the center aisle as a 'Eucharistic Guard of Honor' while Holy Communion is being distributed.

- If there is only one Server at a given Mass, he or she is to take ONE of the candlestick Processional Candlesticks and stand on the middle step between the Priest and Deacon in the center of the main aisle.
- Standing at "stiff attention" is not necessary. Please bend and 'unlock' your knees every so often to relax the leg muscles! Please hold the Processional Candlesticks with one hand at the base and one hand around the wooden candlestick. It's fine to switch hands and change your position when needed.
- While Holy Communion is distributed and an usher comes up to the altar stating a person needs to receive in their pew, please lead the way in front of the Priest, Deacon or Sacristan following behind the Usher to the person in need of Communion.
- When the distribution of Communion ends, the Processional Candlesticks are to be returned to the sides of the Tabernacle.
- After the Processional Candlesticks are back at the Tabernacle, proceed as usual bringing the cover(s) for the ciboria to the Priest or Deacon at the altar.
- Then bring the water cruet to Priest or Deacon so he can purify the chalice and ciborium's. When the Priest or Deacon are finished purifying, bring the chalice and any empty ciborium's to the credence table; then return to your chair.

Concluding Prayer and Final Blessing

(Note: Sometimes there will be a solemn blessing and the server may have to bring holy water to the Priest. It will be present on the altar.)

Recessional

- Immediately following the final blessing, the cross-bearer lifts the cross and begins walking toward the center aisle to the second pew, turns around to face the altar.
- The other server stands in front of him or her facing the altar with hands folded.
- The Priest will be standing on the floor in front of the servers facing the altar. When the priest bows to the altar, the servers bow as well. When the priest turns around, the servers slowly turn around and

proceed with the procession slowly down the main aisle. The other server follow, leaving a space of about three paces.

- When the cross-bearer reaches the Church entrance, he or she puts the cross back on the stand in the sacristy.
- Go to the altar and make sure the candles are not lit.
- Once Mass has ended, the Servers are to return to the store-room on the left side of the Lectern and neatly hang the robes back up.
- If you didn't have time before Mass, please sign in and THANKS for helping! God Bless you and your family.

NOTE: If a Server is there and sees we're shorthanded because someone is missing, it's perfectly fine for a Server to jump-in to help, even if the Mass has started.

Just gently go up the steps in front of the Blessed Mother statue, slip quietly into the server's-ropes room, and then just come out and take your spot at your chair in the Sanctuary. It wouldn't be that much of a distraction to anyone at all. The substitute Server's help would be appreciated very much, and you'd be a good example for other kids and us grown-ups too of someone willing to be of service to the Lord's holy Mass at the last minute, even though you weren't scheduled. A "win-win" all around!

Altar Server Prayer

Generous God, creator of the universe, you call us to worship, to be with you and one another at Mass. I thank you for having called me to assist the Church in our prayer to you. May I be worthy of the trust placed in me and through my example and service bring others closer to you. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.