



HOLY FAMILY PARISH

Altar Servers' Manual

April 2012

Serving Mass is a privilege and an opportunity for you to play a necessary role in the celebration of our most important form of community worship, the Eucharistic Liturgy. Serving requires your attention, your reverence, and your recognition of the duties to be performed. The guidelines included in the manual are meant to serve as a reminder to your training.

Some of you, then, may choose to serve weddings. In a very special way, serving at a wedding affords you a chance to perform a needed service for a couple as they begin their new life together. While serving a wedding is a bit different from a normal Mass, it is not very complicated.

On behalf of our entire parish, thank you for accepting these responsibilities!

Guidelines for serving a Weekend Mass and a Weekday Mass in the Main Church

As an altar server you are expected to:

- 1) Be in the sacristy **15 minutes before Mass** time.
- 2) Wear “church” clothes (no jeans) and dress shoes, no tennis shoes.
- 3) Find and put on a server’s alb. These are vestments made by parishioners, so please treat them carefully and respectfully. Put the alb on and take it off over your head without letting it touch the floor. The red size label is on the inside back of the alb near the neck. Take the alb off the hanger by unzipping the alb at the neck. Put the alb back **on the proper hanger** for the size of the alb and zip the alb in place on the hanger. Put the alb back in the closet in order according to size.
- 4) Walk at a prayerful speed. When following someone in procession, leave a distance of 3 pews or six feet between you and them. Always walk up steps one step at a time.
- 5) Whenever you are walking or standing while not carrying anything, you should fold your hands together and raise them to chest level. When you are sitting, you should sit back with your feet on the floor and hands folded in your lap.
- 6) **Participate in the Mass.** Sing when the people are singing and pray the prayers with the people. Remember, you are leading by your example of prayerfulness. Use the song books provided if you are not carrying anything else in the entrance or exit processions. Use the song books found underneath your chair for the offertory and communion songs.
- 7) **PAY ATTENTION DURING THE MASS.** Be attentive to the priest in case he needs you to do something.
- 8) When carrying items to and from the credence table, walk down the steps to the credence table; do not bend over to the credence table from the sanctuary floor.
- 9) Always remember, if you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND YOUR OWN SUBSTITUTE!**

Before Mass begins:

- 1) Place the bread, wine and water on the gift table.
- 2) Place the tray with the bowls on the credence table near the tabernacle.
- 3) Place the cups, chalice, purificators, and the bowl and towel for hand washing on the credence table on the Holy Family side.
- 4) Light any candles that are in the Sanctuary using the long handled candle lighter only.
- 5) Place the Tabernacle key in front of the Tabernacle.
- 6) Turn the sound system on.
- 7) Ask the priest or deacon if there is anything else you can do to help before Mass begins.

When serving Mass on the Holy Family side:

- 1) Process to the altar with the candles; hold the candles at eye level. Place the candles on the credence table.
- 2) As the servers from the Tabernacle side begin to set the altar, you are to carry over the communion cups, chalice, and purificators from the credence table to the altar. Carry the tray slowly and carefully! If necessary, carry the cups two at a time. Place these on the right side of the altar, then return and place the purificators next to them. If a Deacon is present, hand the items to the deacon for placement on the altar.
- 3) After the altar has been set and the priest moves to main aisle, join the priest to receive the gifts of wine and water. If a Deacon is present, he typically carries the patten with the bread to be consecrated.
- 4) Move to the side of the altar and stand still. Hold the wine cruet or pitcher and water cruet so

that the handles face the priest.

- 5) After the priest pours the wine and water into the chalices, both servers go to the credence table. The server with the wine cruet places it on the credence table and picks up the towel. The server with the water cruet picks up the bowl. Both servers return to the side of the altar. The server with the water and the bowl pours water on the priest's hands until the priest motions with his hands for the server to stop pouring. The server with the towel unfolds the towel and hands it to the priest as the priest moves his hands from the bowl to the towel. Return the water cruet, bowl and towel to the credence table and return to your seats.
- 6) At the sign of peace, go to the altar to exchange a handshake with the priest and return to stand at your chairs. At a weekday Mass, go to the side of the altar when the Eucharistic Ministers come to stand behind the altar, receive Communion and return to stand at your chair. At a weekend Mass, a Eucharistic Minister will bring communion to you at your chair.
- 7) At the end of Mass, after the final blessing, take the candles from the credence table (Sunday only) and walk to the center aisle of the church, face the altar, and wait for the other servers and the priest, bow, turn around, and process to the rear of the church.

When serving Mass on the Tabernacle side:

- 1) Lead the procession to the altar with the cross and place the cross on its stand in the sacristy.
- 2) If the Roman Missal is not already on a stand in front of the Priest: As soon as you get to your chair after putting the cross in its stand, pick up and hold the Roman Missal reverently. When the priest says or sings "Let us pray", take the Roman Missal and stand facing the priest. Hold the Roman Missal so that the priest will be able to open it and say the prayer. Look at the priest, not the Roman Missal, and hold the Roman Missal as steady as you can. When the priest finishes the prayer, close the Roman Missal and return it to the table between your chairs.
- 3) As soon as the assembly (the people) sits for the offertory song, you are immediately to begin setting the altar. **Do not sit down!** First, place the Roman Missal in the center of the altar along with the priest's chalice. The tray of bowls should be placed on the left of the altar. When the priest goes to the front of the sanctuary to receive the gifts, stand to his left.
- 4) At the sign of peace, exchange a sign of peace with the priest then return to your chair, when it is time for Communion, a Eucharistic Minister will bring Communion to you at your chair.
- 5) After you receive Communion and while the priest is distributing Communion to the congregation, clear the altar by removing the priest's chalice, bowl (if there is one), and the purificator returning them to the credence table. Remove the Roman Missal from the altar and place it on the stand in front of the celebrants chair.
- 6) When the priest says or sings "Let us pray", take the Roman Missal and stand facing the priest. When the priest finishes the prayer, close the Roman Missal and return it to the credence table shelf.
- 7) After the final blessing, get the cross from the Sacristy, walk to the center aisle, face the altar, and wait for the other servers and the priest to bow, turn around, and lead the procession to the back of the church.
- 8) Note: There are occasions when only two servers are available. When that occurs, the server on the Tabernacle side must "double" for the missing second server on the Holy Family side. This means that all the above functions must be performed as well as assisting in the reception of the gifts, holding the cruets for the mingling of the water and wine, and assisting when the priest washes his hands.

After Mass:

- 1) Bring bowls, chalices and purificators (items that have contained the Eucharist) to the Sacristy placing them on the counter near the sink (Sacrarium) across from where the priest gets ready.
- 2) Bring the wine pitcher, water cruet, bowl and towel to the server side sink,. Put the hand towel on the rack to dry.
- 3) Extinguish Altar candles with long handled candle lighter, using the bell end to snuff them out. Do not blow candles out.

SCHEDULING FOR SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY MASSES

Mr. Tom Fildes is responsible for scheduling servers. Mr. Fildes tries to have schedules completed in 3-month blocks, out at least two weeks before the current schedule ends. **It is the responsibility of the server to obtain any schedules.** He may be contacted at 330.338.0381 or via email at HolyFamily@tomshelp.com. Schedules can be found at www.holyfamilystow.org, click on Ministries, then Liturgical Ministries, and, then, click on Altar Servers. There you will find the schedules, as well as, a copy of this manual. Printed schedules are also available in the Sacristy, the Parish Office and a copy is posted in each of the classrooms in the middle school. Each week, the Parish Office will call and remind servers of their commitments for the upcoming week. **If you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, it is your responsibility to find a substitute.**

PHONE NUMBERS

To access server's phone numbers, go to www.holyfamilystow.org, click on Ministries, then Liturgical Ministries, and then click on Altar Servers. There you will find a link for the Altar Servers' Phone Contact List (this requires Acrobat Reader).

login is *liturgy*

password is *holycall*

RESIGNING FROM BEING AN ALTAR SERVER

When a server wishes to no longer be scheduled to serve, notification must be in writing to Father Holland. A server will be expected to complete his/her serving responsibility through any posted schedules.

Guidelines for serving a Weekday Mass in the Daily Mass Chapel

Before Mass begins:

- 1) Since there are only two servers for daily Mass, it is important that you make sure you keep your scheduled commitments.
- 2) You will no longer need to wear albs for daily Mass in the Daily Mass Chapel. Please dress appropriately to serve.
- 3) Make sure that the bread, wine and water have been placed upon the offertory table.
- 4) Make sure that the cups, chalice, purificators, bowl for hand-washing, and a towel have been placed upon the credence table.
- 5) Light the altar candles.
- 6) Ask the priest if there is anything else you can do to help before Mass begins.

Since this is a weekday Mass, it is a bit simpler than a Sunday Mass:

- 1) There is no Processional Cross in the daily Mass chapel.
- 2) Process into the chapel, side-by-side, bow to the altar, and then go to your places.
- 3) If the Roman Missal is not being used on a stand in front of the Priest celebrant: when the priest says "Let us pray", take the Roman Missal and stand facing the priest. Hold the Roman Missal so that the priest will be able to open it and say the prayer. Look at the priest, not the Roman Missal, and hold the Roman Missal as steady as you can. When the priest finishes the prayer, close the Roman Missal and return it to the table between your chairs.
- 4) After the prayers of the faithful, the priest will move to the front of the altar to receive the gifts. As soon as the assembly (the people) sits, you are immediately to begin setting the altar. **Do not sit down!** First, place the Roman Missal in the center of the altar along with the priest's chalice. Then, place the cups and purificators to the right side of the altar.
- 5) After the altar has been set, join the priest to receive the gifts of wine and water.
- 6) Move to the side of the altar and stand still. Hold the wine cruet or pitcher and water cruet so that the handles face the priest.
- 7) After the priest pours the wine and water into the chalices, both servers go to the credence table. The server with the wine cruet places it on the credence table and picks up the towel. The server with the water cruet picks up the bowl. Both servers return to the side of the altar. The server with the water and the bowl pours water on the priest's hands until the priest motions with his hands for the server to stop pouring. The server with the towel unfolds the towel and hands it to the priest as the priest moves his hands from the bowl to the towel. Return the water cruet, bowl and towel to the credence table and return to your seats.
- 8) At the sign of peace, go to the altar to exchange a handshake with the priest and return to stand at your chairs. At a weekday Mass, go to the side of the altar when the Eucharistic Ministers come to stand behind the altar, receive Communion and return to stand at your chair.
- 9) At the end of Mass, after the final blessing, walk to the front of the altar, face the altar, and wait for the other servers and the priest, bow, turn around, and process to the rear of the chapel.

After Mass:

- 1) Bring bowls, chalices and purificators (items that have contained the Eucharist) to the Weekday Mass Sacristy placing them on the counter.
- 2) Bring the wine cruet, water cruet, bowl and towel to the Weekday Mass Sacristy, rinse the wine pitcher, empty the bowl and water cruet into the sink and place the bowl and water cruet upside down in the dish rack. Put the hand towel on the rack to dry.
- 3) Extinguish Altar candles with long handled candle lighter, using the bell end to snuff them out. Do not blow candles out.

Guidelines for serving a Wedding

Similar to a normal Mass, as server for a wedding, you are expected to:

- 1) Be in the sacristy 15 minutes before the scheduled wedding time (usually weddings are scheduled at 1:00pm on Saturday but you will be notified of the exact time.)
- 2) Wear "church" clothes (no jeans) and dress shoes, no tennis shoes.
- 3) Find and put on a server's alb.
- 4) Walk at a prayerful speed.
- 5) Participate. Sing when the people are singing and pray the prayers with the people.
- 6) Pay attention. Be attentive to the priest/deacon in case he needs you to do something.

Before the wedding begins:

- 1) Ask the priest/deacon if this is a Wedding Mass or a Wedding outside of Mass. Also ask the priest/deacon to review how the service will be done. Practically every priest and deacon do some things differently for weddings. The following are typical guidelines to be familiar with but be sure to arrive ahead of time and confer with the presider.
- 2) **If this is a Wedding Mass,**
 - a. Place the bread, wine and water on the offertory table.
 - b. Place the priest's chalice, purificators, and cups on the credence table near the tabernacle.
 - c. Place the Holy Water bucket with sprinkler and silver dish for the rings on the same credence table.
 - d. Place the tabernacle key in front of the Tabernacle.
 - e. Retrieve the processional cross from the back of the church and bring it into the sacristy. (Note: Fr. Ed does not use processional cross in weddings.)
- 3) **If this is a Wedding outside of Mass,**
 - f. Place the Holy Water bucket with sprinkler and silver dish for the rings on the same credence table.
 - g. Retrieve the processional cross from the back of the church and bring it into the sacristy.
- 4) Light any candles that are in the Sanctuary using the long handled candle lighter only.
- 5) Turn the sound system on.
- 6) Ask the priest/deacon if there is anything else you can do to help before the wedding begins.

Since only two servers are scheduled for a wedding, both sit on the Tabernacle side, and:

- 1) Using the sacristy door (behind the tabernacle), the servers will lead the procession with the Cross. Servers will lead the priest/deacon, groomsmen, and groom towards the center aisle. Keep the sanctuary on your right. When you arrive at the front of the sanctuary, bow and go to your places.
- 2) When the priest says or sings "Let us pray", one of the servers will bring the Roman Missal to the priest. As usual, please make sure that you hold the Roman Missal so that the priest will be able to open it. Look at the priest, not the Roman Missal, and hold the Roman Missal as steady as you can. When the priest finishes the prayer, close the Roman Missal and return it to table.
- 3) **After the homily,** one of the servers should bring the holy water bucket and silver dish to the priest/deacon. He will ask you to stand near him and hold these items. He might ask you to give the silver dish to best man so that he may place the rings on it.

- 4) Once the priest/deacon has finished sprinkling the rings with the holy water and the rings are given to the couple, you may return to your place. The next steps:
 - a. **If this is a Wedding Mass**, once the Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions) are completed, you will set the altar. The altar is set-up as it would be for a normal weekday/weekend Mass. Until the Prayer after Communion, Mass will continue as normal. Since there are only two of you, you will both perform the duties usually divided between sides at a normal Mass.
 - b. **If this is a Wedding outside of Mass**, once the Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions) are completed, the wedding will continue with the Our Father.
- 5) Both a Wedding Mass and a Wedding outside of Mass conclude with the priest/deacon presenting the newly-married couple for the first time. As soon as this announcement is made, the couple will begin to process out of the church.
- 6) Once the priest/deacon turns back towards the altar to leave, and he indicates that you are free to go as well, quietly make your way back to the sacristy. There is no closing procession.

Afterwards:

- 1) Bring the Holy Water bucket with sprinkler and silver dish for the rings back to the sacristy.
- 2) Extinguish Altar candles with long handled candle lighter, using the bell end to snuff them out. Do not blow candles out.
- 3) **Only if this is a Wedding Mass**,
 - a. Bring bowls, chalices and purificators (items that have contained the Eucharist) to the Sacristy placing them on the counter near the sink (Sacrarium) across from where the priest gets ready.
 - b. Bring the wine pitcher, water cruet, bowl and towel to the server side sink, rinse the wine pitcher, empty the bowl and water cruet into the sink and place the bowl and water cruet upside down in the dish rack. Put the hand towel on the rack to dry.
 - c. Retrieve the Tabernacle key and place it on the hook, inside the safe.

SCHEDULING FOR WEDDINGS

Mrs. Rose Sicilano, at the Parish Office, is responsible for scheduling. She will call you and arrange for you to serve a wedding. Once you are committed, please make every effort to be there. If you are unable to keep a scheduled time, please inform Mrs. Sicilano as soon as possible! She can be reached by calling 330.688.6411.

PAYMENT

Since serving a wedding involves a special time commitment, outside of the usual weekday/weekend Mass schedule, each wedding server receives \$10 which will be given to you either by the priest/deacon or by Mrs. Kay Staff, our Wedding Coordinator. This will be done either just before or after the wedding.

Glossary of Terms

Alb – A white or cream colored vestment symbolizing one's baptism. From now on, these are worn only on Sundays or at Masses within the main church.

Altar – The permanent table where the bread and wine are consecrated during the Liturgy.

Ambo – The table or reading stand where the Bible readings are proclaimed during the Liturgy.

Chalice – A cup used for Communion during the Liturgy.

Credence Table – A side table in the Sanctuary where items used in the Liturgy are kept.

Cruet – A container for the wine and water during the Liturgy.

Lectionary – The book that contains the Bible readings used during the Liturgy.

Purificator – A white cloth used to clean a chalice or cup.

Roman Missal – The book the priest uses that contains the prayers used during the Mass.

Sacrarium – The sink in the sacristy used for the rinse water from the washing of the vessels that contained the Body and Blood of Christ. This sink empties directly into the ground below the Church.

Sacristy – The room where the priests and other ministers prepare for the Liturgy.

Sanctuary – The place in the church where the altar and pulpit are located.

Tabernacle – A place where the Eucharist is reserved for distribution to the sick.