

Servers must be familiar with these terms. You should know what these things are, how they are used and where they are kept.

Alb	The white garment priests wear under the chasuble and servers wear with a cincture (rope)
Altar	The central table located in the middle of the Sanctuary where we all gather to celebrate the Eucharist. Most of the action of the liturgy of the Eucharist takes place at the Altar. We recognize the presence of Christ in the altar and it is always treated with dignity.
Ambo	The place where the readings and the Gospel are proclaimed, and the Homily is usually given.
Blessed Sacrament Boat	The consecrated bread and wine, which can be reserved in the tabernacle.
The Book of Gospels	A small metal container that holds the incense to be put in the Thurible. It has a cover and comes with a small spoon. Remember only the priest or Deacon can put incense in the Thurible.
Bowl Paten	This is a large book that contains the Gospel readings. It is carried in the procession and placed on the Altar.
Chalice	The bowls used to hold the hosts that will be consecrated during the Mass. We currently use one large paten that is brought forward with the gifts and matching small patens.
Ciborium	The largest of the cups, used at Mass to hold the wine that becomes the Blood of Christ. It is kept on the credence table and brought to the Altar when the Altar is set.
Cincture	This is a chalice-like vessel with a lid. It is used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle.
Corporal Credence Table Cruet	The rope belt that is used with an alb. Different colors for different seasons and feasts.
Decanter or Flagon	The large square white cloth used on the altar.
Lavabo Bowl	A small table where the Sacred Vessels are kept until needed (this is the counter in the Sacristy).
Lavabo Towel	The vessel that contains the water. It is on the Credence table with the Lavabo bowl.
Lectionary	This is the bottle used to hold the wine that will be consecrated at Mass. It is filled before Mass and kept on the Gift Table for the procession that will bring the gifts forward.
Pall	Used by the priest to wash to wash his fingers during the Preparation of the Gifts.
Processional Cross Purificator	Used by the priest to dry his fingers after they have been washed during the Preparation of Gifts.
Sacramentary	This book contains all the Scripture readings for Mass. It is placed on the Ambo before Mass begins.
Sacristy Sanctuary	This is a stiff square white cover that is placed over the Chalice to protect its contents during Mass. Also the cloth covering for the casket at a funeral.
Tabernacle Thurible	This is the cross mounted on a long pole that is carried at the head of the procession. It is kept in a stand during the Mass.
	The cloth napkin used with the chalice. Every chalice needs its own purificator.
	This is the smallest red book that contains all the words and prayers the priest uses during Mass. This book is on the bench where the servers are seated.
	The room where we prepare for Mass and where Mass supplies are kept.
	The raised platform area where the altar, ambo, presider's chair and tabernacle are located.
	The golden box where consecrated hosts are kept after Mass
	The metal container with a chain in which charcoal and incense are burned for liturgical ceremonies. It is sometimes called a censer.

Saint Gabriel the Archangel Altar Server Policies and Procedures

We are happy that you volunteered to be an altar server. It is a very important role. Serving well helps everyone celebrate Mass better.

- Serving at the altar is an honor and privilege, not a right. Always conduct yourself in a way that commands respect
- Show honor and respect for the people assembled for prayer by not drawing attention to yourself by unnecessary talking, fidgeting, sloppy posture, etc.
- Show honor and respect for the Mass, priest, and other liturgical ministers by being on time. Be at church 20-25 minutes before Mass.
- If you are not able to serve when scheduled, YOU are responsible for finding a replacement as soon as possible.
- Show the proper reverence by wearing an alb that fits properly. Also show respect for your fellow servers by hanging up your alb or putting away others that are out of place.
- Most importantly, serving at the altar is about maintaining the proper attitude of reverence and paying attention to the presider and Mass. We are there to pray and worship God, all actions we do is aimed at that important end.

PREPARING FOR MASS

- Get plenty of rest and eat a light meal before the Mass; you want to be alert and attentive. If you do not feel well, you are not obligated to serve but make every effort to find a substitute
- Show honor and respect for yourself by good grooming and appropriate attire.
 - Males: Slacks or dress pants (brown, black, gray, navy or tan dress pants with a belt), Socks - black, dark blue or brown solid color dress socks, Shirts - solid colored dress shirt with collar (preferably white), Shoes -dress shoes (no athletic shoes or sandals)
 - Females: Dresses / skirts - at least knee length and not form fitting or tight; Slacks - dress slacks, colors same as for males; Stockings / tights - black, white or nude solid color hose or tights; Tops - opaque fabric with a collar and sleeves; Shoes - dress shoes (1-inch heels or shorter) and not open-toed
- Sign in with the Sacristan 20-25 minutes before Mass starts. If you are not scheduled to serve, check with the Sacristan in case there are last minute changes or absences
- Dress in an unwrinkled, proper-fitting alb, cincture (rope belt), and cross
- Place the chalices, purificators, corporal, cruet, lavabo bowl and towel on the credence counter or make sure they are there
- Get the processional cross and candles and stay in the narthex for any last minute instructions or assignments
- Be especially ready to help the priest if he is a visitor to our parish. He may ask questions about how the Mass is celebrated in our parish. If he does, answer his questions clearly or if you do not know the answer, ask the Sacristan
- Double check everything. Always ask if you are unsure about anything. Never be afraid to ask.

The Order of Mass

The elements of Mass have always remained the same. We refer to these elements as the Introductory Rite, Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rite. Following is a basic outline of the Mass, which you should learn.

Introductory Rite

Procession: Usually from the back of the church down the aisle.

Greeting: By the Celebrant

Penitential Rite/Kyrie: (Lord, have Mercy) Said or sung.

Opening Prayer or Collect: “*Let us pray...*” – altar server presents the *Sacramentary / Missal to the celebrant*

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Read by a lector, usually from the Old Testament.

Responsorial Psalm: Usually lead by the cantor (song leader)

Second Reading: Also read by a lector.

Gospel Acclamation: Usually sung – *Candle bearers retrieve the candle for the gospel reading; the thurifer retrieves the thurible and boat of incense*

Gospel: Taken from one of the four Gospels, it is read by the priest or deacon

Homily: Presented by the priest or deacon, explaining the Scriptures.

Profession of Faith: Stated at Mass and certain feasts. All join in this declaration.

Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts: *Altar servers prepare the Altar; accompany the priest to receive the gifts.*

Eucharistic Prayer: *servers kneel after the Sanctus, ring the bells at the Epiclecic and at the blessing of the Body and Blood of Christ; thurifer incense the Body and Blood of Christ; stand at the Our Father.*

Communion Rite: This begins with the Our Father and ends with the Prayer after Communion, “*Let us pray...*” – altar server presents the *Sacramentary / Missal to the celebrant*

Concluding Rite – *altar servers retrieve the articles they processed in with at the beginning of the Mass*

Final Blessing and Dismissal: The priest sends the assembly out to serve God and His people. The ministers leave in procession.

Since servers are important ministers of the celebration, you should be **very familiar** with the order of Mass and what actions you must accomplish. You have to know the things you need to do very well so they come naturally to you. This leaves you free to concentrate on your participation in the Mass.

When there are two servers, one is designated as the cross bearer and one as the book bearer. When there are 4 servers, two will be candle bearers. Don't always perform just one role or task. Study and know all the roles so that you can serve by your self, if needed. You should always strive for perfection.

If something does go wrong, stay calm!! Quick movements will only draw attention to or lead to other mistakes. If there is a problem, think about it for a moment; then if possible do what is necessary to correct the problem. Move quietly to the other server(s) and ask them for help, if necessary.

ACTIONS TO LEARN

- Bowing – When you bow to someone or something at Mass, it should be a smooth, forward inclining of your head and shoulders. When you bow to the altar, bow profoundly (deeply) at the waist. When you bow to the priest or deacon, bow your head slowly (simple) and gracefully. When several servers are bowing, bow at the same time and at the same angle.
- Carrying the Cross – When carrying the cross, the bottom of the pole should be kept about waist high with your right hand holding the pole about throat level and your left hand placed approximately one foot lower. The corpus (figure of Christ) should always face forward. When carrying the cross, the cross bearer does not genuflect.
- Carrying the Candles – Candle-bearers process in pairs. When processing in, a candle-bearer will be on either side of the cross-bearer; the outside hand goes above the knob, and inside hand below the knob. Candles should be held upright at all times so that melted wax does not drip onto the floor. Candles are also brought forth for the gospel reading
- Genuflecting
 - Rule #1: If there is a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament in the sanctuary, a genuflection should be made before and after Mass, and whenever passing in front of the tabernacle
 - Rule #2: If you are carrying a cross or candle; do not genuflect, bow instead
 - Proper genuflection: begin in a standing position; face the tabernacle (do not genuflect while moving); move your right leg back (about half a step); bend your right knee until it touches the ground; pause briefly; then rise to your original position, with feet together.
- Hands – There is a simple rule you will always follow during the Mass: Unless you are sitting down or carrying something (like a candle), your hands should be kept joined in front of your chest in a prayerful manner. If you are carrying something in one hand, hold the other hand flat on your chest.
- Incensing – required to incense the priest and congregation if no deacon is present. Also incense the offerings during the blessing.
- Kneeling – When kneeling, your body should be upright and your hands should be in front and properly folded in a prayerful manner.
- Ringing the bells – when ringing the bells, shake the bells 2-3 times and let them ring out. This occurs at the Epiclecic and blessing of the offerings.
- Silence – Except when making the proper responses, you should remain silent. You do not want to distract the priest or the congregation by whispering to the other servers. After receiving Communion, you should praise God in your heart and pray in silence in the Sacristy.
- Sitting – When sitting, make sure your body is erect, no slouching. The palms of your hands should be on your legs, with your fingers extended.
- Standing – Remember to keep your posture straight; don not slouch. When standing, your body should be erect and your hand properly folded.
- Walking – Walking should be graceful and smooth. The pace should be deliberate, not rushed. Hands should be folded, posture should be straight
- Washing the Celebrants hands – done during the end of the preparation of the gifts and after the Celebrant returns to their chair after Communion. The lavabo bowl is always to the left of the pitcher