

SERVERS REFERENCE
(Revised *February 1, 2011*)

The Pastor and parishioners are grateful to you for your willingness to minister at Holy Mass and for helping their worship to be more meaningful. You have made a commitment to serve:

- a. Arrive at least **15 minutes before Mass and check in with the Mass overseer.**
- b. Get someone to sub for you if you cannot keep your obligation. Make changes on the mass overseers clip board.
- c. Have your hair well-groomed, hands clean and wear your best shoes (these show from beneath your alb).
- d. Always show respect and dignity when serving.
- e. If you are not scheduled to serve and are willing please check in with the Mass overseer to volunteer, if the scheduled servers do not arrive by 10 minutes before mass begins, replacements will be needed.
- f. Decide among yourselves who will be in each position. The tallest server should carry the cross and attend to the duties that go with that position.

1. Upon your arrival at church:

- a. Ask if there is anything special you need to know: i.e. incense, sprinkling, etc.
- b. Go to Server's Sacristy and put on your robe. Make sure you have the correct size so it hangs properly. Your alb should be long enough to touch the top of the back of your shoes.
- c. Turn off the light and close the door to the Sacristy.
- d. Light the candles at the ambo with fire from the tabernacle light, it is a continuation of the Easter fire.
- e. Make sure there is water in the pitcher for the hand washing and that there are towels in the basket for drying hands, (there is a small corporal in the bottom of the basket to use if the precious blood or bread happens to fall on the floor during communion, these are kept in a drawer in the Priest's Sacristy with a label on the front); also the small cruet of water is there for the priest to use with the wine.
- f. If the Mass overseer has not done so, take the bread dish from the counter and wine from the little refrigerator and place these "gifts" on the table at the back of the church by the Book of Gospels.
- g. Close the door behind you.
- h. Genuflect (one knee down) the first time you walk before the. This is a sign of reverence for Christ who is present in the Tabernacle.
- i. Make sure the processional cross and unlit candles are in the Reconciliation Room. If there are not three servers the candles need to be lit and placed in the stands by the altar, before Mass begins.
- j. Wait by the Reconciliation Room for Mass to begin. Light the candles from the vigil rack a minute before the bells ring. Take the cross and candles to line up in the center aisle when the first lector goes up to the lectern to announce the opening greeting (Good morning, my name is.....).

2. **Mass begins:**

- a. The cross bearer sets the pace. Do not start until the lector who has made the announcement is ready with the Book of Gospels to join the procession. Do not walk too fast. The candles, then the lectors, and then the priest. In a special event there may be more people in the procession, check with the overseer for correct line up.

- b. The entire procession ends up with toes touching the front step. The cross and left candle move far enough to the left to make room for the lector, the candle on the right moves far enough over to make room for the lectors, deacon(s) if any, and the priest(s). It is not necessary for everyone to stand in between the railings. The first lector, who carries the Book of Gospels will be on Fr. Bob's left. The lector *not* carrying the Gospel book and the priest will bow to reverence the altar. If you are not carrying something you bow to the altar, cross and candle bearers do not bow to the altar while you are holding the cross or candles.
- c. The Cross bearer proceeds to the sacristy to place the cross on the stand, the candle bearers place the candles on the stands next to the altar, the first lector places the Gospel book on the altar, the priest kisses the altar and goes to his chair. Always move slowly and with dignity. Stand in front of the sacristy doors, joining in with the prayers until after the opening prayer. (See next paragraph.)
- d. **Opening Prayer:** When the priest says, "Let us pray..." the book server will pick up the Book from the stand, reverently approach the priest. Hold the Book facing outward, against your chest. Hold it out to him, (on edge so he may reach the ribbons easily to open it,) to his side, not directly in front of him, and let him guide you a little once it is open. Smaller servers should hold the book against his/her chest; this will help steady it. Hold the book as steady as you can for the priest to read from it. You *must stand very still* while he reads...and pay attention to the prayer-both now and at the end of Mass...do not be looking somewhere else, always keep your eyes on the action of the priest. After replacing the Book on the stand, servers will now go together (all three) to the first pew on the left side, all of you may be seated. You should say all the prayers that the assembly prays, as well as sing the hymns.
- e. **Creed:** if you do not know it by heart, use the missalette to guide you. Remember to make the profound bow at the proper time. You are the example for the people behind you to follow. Prayers of the Faithful (or Intercessions): after the Intercessions, everyone sits.
- f. **Presentation of Gifts:** When the priest leaves his chair to receive the gifts at the foot of the steps, two (2) of the servers join him to assist him, one on each side. The third server sets the altar while Father and other servers receive the gifts.
Bring the corporal to the altar, make sure it is right side up on the altar, unfold it, side to side first, then top and bottom, *Never shake the corporal out to unfold it*. Place the edge of the sacramentary in the middle of corporal, with the top of the book at the top of the corporal, this will take practice. Place the tray of chalices and the purificators on the altar. Step back next to the sacristy door and stand with folded hands while the other servers do their duties. In the case of incense being used, after setting the altar, go immediately into the servers' sacristy to get the thurible and incense boat and wait just outside the doorway until the priest needs it. Bring it to him when he turns toward you.
The baskets of food and money will be handed by the priest to one of the servers. The other server will be handed the wine. The priest will carry the bread himself.

- g. Servers go to the credence table, place the baskets under the credence table. The server with the wine *removes the stopper* from the decanter. The other server picks up the water (which was on the table already) removing the stopper. Go to the altar, (standing off to the side, not behind the priest) the wine should be closest to the altar, for the priest to take it from you. He will take the water, then return the water cruet to you. *Wait while he pours the wine into all the chalices*, then gives the empty wine flagon or cruet back to the server. Return together to the credence table. Replace the stoppers in both, and leave them on the credence table.
- h. Servers take the water pitcher and basin (Lavabo basin) and a towel back to the altar for the washing of the hands (again standing to the side, not behind the priest.) When the priest turns to you, pour a small amount of water over his hands holding the lavabo basin under his hands, try to hold it above the altar so the people can see. He will take the towel and dry his hands, he will give the towel back to you, turn and go back to the credence table. Set the pitcher and bowl on the credence table and the towel in the basket, please do not place the pitcher back into the lavabo bowl now that it has water in it. All three (3) servers return to the pew. (If incense is used, father will wash his hands after incensing, then wait for the thurifer person to return the censer to the sacristy and return to the pew together.)
- i. **Holy, Holy, Holy:** After the Holy, Holy, Holy...you will all kneel in your pew.
- j. **Our Father and the sign of peace.** Exchange the sign of peace with each other and the people close to you. After you exchange the sign of peace, go immediately, reverently, to the sanctuary and exchange the sign of peace with the priest, then step back.
- k. **Communion:** The book server carefully takes the Book from the priest and replaces it on the stand. You will receive Communion in the sanctuary, along with the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Return to your pew, reverently, as soon as all of you have received from the cup, while Holy Communion is distributed to the Extraordinary Ministers. You need to be out of the sanctuary and back to your pew before the 'communion line' begins.
- l. **After Communion:** When the priest stands after communion and says let us pray immediately go to the credence table picking up the sacramentary from the stand for the closing prayer and stand next to Father. The cross bearer accompanies the Book server and goes to get the cross at this time, stands in front of the closed door until after the final blessing. Book server-when the priest closes the Book return it to the stand. Father will go to kiss the altar as he did in the beginning, the cross bearer now leads the book server and the priest to the foot of the steps facing the altar. The other server comes from the pew with the song sheet and stands at the foot of the step.
- m. **Recessional:** When the priest bows to the altar, the two servers with song sheets also bow, the cross leads the procession to the back of the church, with the other servers following (*singing the closing hymn*). You may go to the Reconciliation Room and place the cross. Wait patiently until the people have cleared the aisle for you to make your way back to the sacristy.

- n. **Ambo and Altar Candles:** Extinguish the candles at the ambo and the altar on your way to the sacristy, hang your alb neatly.

3. **Miscellaneous Items:**

- a. During Mass, if a candle should be blown out, wait until the next time you are going to the sanctuary for another duty to go to chair for the candle lighter and re-light the candle. This will not look funny, it will look like you are doing your duty.
- b. Whenever you leave one of the sacristies the door should be closed; quietly pull it shut.
- c. Either Fr. Bob or the sacristan usually set up for Mass, but you should be aware of where things are kept in case you need to get anything that may have been forgotten or missed by them. Don't be afraid to ask.
- d. **Incense: Everyone needs to know how to use the incense.**
- e. **It is your responsibility to get a monthly schedule and note the dates and times that you are scheduled.** You will notice an asterisk (*) next to the first name for each Mass—this is the 'captain' for that Mass. We would like the captain to take charge of being sure that there are three servers present by at least 10 minutes before Mass. If there are not 3 server present either get a sub to fill in or notify the Mass overseer of the shortage. You are role models for others when you are performing as an altar server. This is a task of honor.
- f. **Pay attention and keep your eyes on the priest, that is where the action is.**

John Mischel and Diane Dowker are the liaisons to this ministry. If you have questions they are very helpful. Mary Halek is also always available for information and open to suggestions or willing to listen to concerns. Jeanne Boyd makes the monthly schedule; if you know you are not going to be available at certain times please let her know and she will exclude you from the dates you need to be off.

Thank you for your willingness to serve at the table of our Lord.