

St. Bernard's Parish

# Guidelines for Altar Servers



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# The Ministry of the Altar Server

Since Vatican Council II, Catholics have become accustomed to lay people serving during the liturgy as lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, cantors, musicians, ushers and altar servers. All are “liturgical ministers” and have an important role in our liturgical celebrations. They serve the assembly that has gathered for prayer and worship and assist in its prayer. One of the oldest liturgical ministries is the altar server.

Because altar servers are so visible to the assembly throughout the liturgy, they have a unique opportunity to model how and when to sit, stand and kneel. When they sing with enthusiasm and pray from their hearts, they encourage others to do the same. Of all the things that altar servers do during the Mass, perhaps none is more important than the good example they give to the assembly of how to pray with dignity and grace.

## General Requirements

All registered parishioners who are young gentlemen and ladies in the fifth grade or higher and have received the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion are welcome to serve. Servers are encouraged to participate through their senior year of high school and are welcome to return to assist during college breaks. All candidates must attend the training sessions and have the commitment and ability to perform this role with reverence.

A server must want to serve at the altar of God. A reluctant or disinterested server is a distraction during the Mass. Altar servers must attend every Mass they are scheduled. All altar servers are responsible for finding a substitute when they are unable to serve at their scheduled time. The care and attention that altar servers give to their ministry allows the prayer of the Church to take place with reverence and beauty - **so know what you are doing and do it well!**

## Dress Code

Altar servers show respect for the Mass they attend by wearing proper attire. Just because you are wearing an alb doesn't mean you can look like you are ready to go to the beach underneath it!

These are the rules to follow when you are serving.

### Clothing:

- ◆ Slacks/dress pants or dresses/skirts (with hem no more than 3" above the knee).
- ◆ Dress shirts/blouses (must have sleeves).

No T-Shirts with signage - No Shorts - No Denim Jeans!

### Footwear:

- ◆ **Dress shoes ONLY! No exceptions!** (Heels are to be no higher than 2" and must have some type of a back. No slip-ons.)

No Sneakers/Tennis Shoes - No Flip-Flops

### Hair/Makeup/Jewelry:

- ◆ Hair is to look natural, neat and clean. Hair cuts should be appropriate for the celebration of Mass. (Long hair needs to be pulled back and kept out of the way of the eyes.)
- ◆ If makeup is worn it should be minimal and natural looking.
- ◆ Any jewelry that is worn needs to be covered up so it is not a distraction. (Watches are permissible since the alb will usually cover them.)

You should always look neat and presentable when you serve! Please remember that you set an example to others both inside and outside of the church.

## The Mass

For Catholics, nothing is more important than the Mass. It is the heart and soul of our worship of God. It is the celebration that gives us the strength we need to live a Christian life. Because of its importance, the Church places a serious obligation on all of its members to take part in the Mass each Sunday and Holy Day.

Altar servers have a serious responsibility to prepare properly for the Mass in which they serve. It is important to pray and reflect before Mass begins. If you have any questions, please ask the presider or fellow altar servers for assistance. During Communion and throughout the Mass, remember to remain quiet and reverent. Be respectful.

1. Make sure you know when you are scheduled to serve!
2. If you cannot serve on your scheduled day - **You must find a substitute!** Simply requesting a substitute on *Ministry Scheduler Pro* does not mean you have a replacement. You must assure that someone replies to the request or else you must call other servers to find a substitute.
3. Dress appropriately.
4. (Church) Arrive a minimum of 15 minutes before the liturgy begins, check off name on ministry list and check for any changes or special instructions.  
(HFC) Arrive a minimum of 20 minutes before the liturgy begins, check off name on ministry list and check for any changes or special instructions.
5. Wash your hands before Mass in the *altar server sacristy/sacristy bathroom* or use the hand sanitizer. Do not serve Mass with dirty hands!
6. Vest up. (Remember, do not play with or twirl cinctures during Mass).
7. Set up the *credence table* using the diagram on bulletin board.
8. Put gifts on the *gift table* at the back of the church/worship space.
9. Light candles before Mass starts.
10. Go to *vestibule/gathering space*, wait with the celebrant, and remain quiet. (This is a time for prayer and reflection).

# Altar Server Duties During Mass

## Procession

- 1) Cross Server
- 2) Candle Servers
- 3) Book of Gospels
- 4) Altar Servers
- 5) Celebrant

## Cross/Book

- ◆ Start to process in when the celebrant tells you. Walk slowly.
- ◆ (Church) Walk all the way into the priest's sacristy. Do not genuflect. Put cross on stand.  
(HFC) Walk all the way to the right side of sanctuary. Do not genuflect. Put cross on stand behind wall.
- ◆ Walk into the sanctuary and pick up the *Roman Missal* and wait until the celebrant needs the book.
- ◆ Stand in front of celebrant and open the book. Be sure to keep your fingers off the pages (to prevent staining or tearing).
- ◆ When done, go and place the book back on the stand and sit down.
- ◆ After the readings and homily pick up the binder and bring it to the celebrant (for the creed). When done, go and place the Roman Missal/ binder back on the stand and sit down.
- ◆ When the altar is being prepared, bring the Roman Missal to the altar.
- ◆ Ring bells. Once for the: 1) Invocation.\*  
3 times for each: 2) Elevation of the Body of Christ.\*  
3) Elevation of the Chalice.\*  
(\*See explanation for these in the index.)
- ◆ After communion, when the altar is being cleared, move the Roman Missal to the appropriate stand.
- ◆ When the priest stands for the final prayer, pick up the Roman Missal/binder and bring it to him. When he closes the book, return it to the stand and then go and get the cross for the recessional.

- ◆ Walk down the steps (*be careful*) and turn and wait for the celebrant and other altar servers.
- ◆ When the celebrant turns around to walk to the back of the church/worship space, turn around and proceed to walk back.
- ◆ (Church) At the *vestibule door* (outside), stop and turn towards the celebrant.  
(HFC) At the *gathering space* door inside, stop with the celebrant.
- ◆ The celebrant, deacon and altar servers bow to cross.
- ◆ Then all servers proceed to the sacristy.
- ◆ Put the cross on the stand in the sacristy.

## Candles

- ◆ Start to process in when the celebrant tells you. When holding the candle always hold it vertically. ↑ Holding the candle at an angle ↗ will cause them to leak and looks sloppy.
- ◆ (Church) Walk all the way into the *priest's sacristy*. Do not genuflect. Put candles on stands. Go and stand in place at altar server pew.  
(HFC) Walk all the way to the right side of sanctuary. Do not genuflect. Put candles on table behind wall. Go and stand in place.
- ◆ When it is time for the Gospel, go and get the candles and stand behind the altar; one on either side of celebrant/deacon. (*Msgr. Rocha does not like to use the candles during Eastertime when the Paschal Candle is out.*)
- ◆ When the celebrant turns to go towards the ambo, servers proceed in front of the celebrant, walking towards the ambo. Servers stand on each side of the ambo during the Gospel reading.
- ◆ After the Gospel, bring the candles back to where you got them. Sit down when done.
- ◆ During the offertory, when the first collection is two-thirds completed, go and get the candles. Proceed out (*being careful going down the steps*) and go to the back of the church/worship space. Pay attention to see if the gift family is ready to proceed down the aisle. Don't wait to be told to process down the aisle. When the *gifts (bread, wine and collection)* are ready to be brought up, walk back to the sanctuary (do not genuflect) and put candles back where you got them. Sit down when done.

- ◆ After the *Post Communion* prayer, announcements and final blessing, get the candles for the recessional.
- ◆ Follow the cross bearer, walk down the steps (*be careful*) and turn to wait for the celebrant and other altar servers.
- ◆ When the celebrant turns around to walk to the back of the church/worship space, turn around and proceed to walk back.
- ◆ (Church) At the vestibule door (outside), stop and turn towards the celebrant.  
(HFC) At the gathering space door inside, stop with the celebrant.
- ◆ The celebrant, deacon and altar servers bow to cross.
- ◆ Then all servers proceed to the sacristy.
- ◆ Put the candles back where you got them in the sacristy.

## **Altar**

- ◆ Start to process in when the celebrant tells you to start walking.
- ◆ (Church) Walk all the way to the steps and genuflect when the celebrant does. Go up steps before the celebrant. Stand in place at the altar server chairs.  
(HFC) Walk all the way to the steps and bow/genuflect when the celebrant does. The celebrant walks up on the right of the sanctuary, you walk up on the left of the sanctuary. Walk to the altar server chairs and stand in place. Sit down after opening prayer.
- ◆ After the *Prayers of the Faithful* go and set up the altar. \*(See explanation on *Altar Set-up* page). Then sit down.
- ◆ When the gifts are being brought to the altar, accompany the celebrant to assist. If you are given the ciborium, place it on the altar. If you are given the decanter, take the topper off the decanter and place the decanter on the altar.
- ◆ Go to the *credence table* and bring the water cruet immediately. Take the topper off and hand the cruet to the priest with the handle facing toward him.
- ◆ When the priest or deacon has poured out the wine into the communion cups, return the empty decanter to the credence table.
- ◆ After that it will be time to wash the celebrant's hands. Pour all the water over the priest's hands.



- ◆ Go back to your seat when finished .
- ◆ At Communion time, cross over the Sanctuary to receive Communion with the other altar servers. Be sure to reverence the altar when crossing.
- ◆ After Communion, the priest will purify the vessels. When he is done, he will place the vessels on the side of the altar for you to take to the credence table. After the priest has purified the vessels, he will need you to pour some water into his chalice. Bring the water cruet to him and pour it into the chalice until the priest tells you to stop.
- ◆ Once all the vessels are purified, the priest may fold the corporal or he may have you fold them. Follow the instructions on the Altar Set-up page to do this.
- ◆ (Church) After the final blessing of Mass, follow the candle servers and walk down the sanctuary steps (*be careful*) and turn and wait for the celebrant. Genuflect/bow when they do.  
(HFC) After Mass walk down the steps (*be careful*) and turn and wait for the celebrant. Genuflect/bow when they do.
- ◆ When the Celebrant turns around to walk to the back of the church/worship Space, you turn around and proceed to walk back.
- ◆ (Church) At the *vestibule door* (outside), stop and turn towards the celebrant.  
(HFC) At the *gathering space* door inside, stop with the celebrant.
- ◆ The celebrant, deacon and altar servers bow to cross. Then all servers proceed to the sacristy.

## **Duties After Mass For All Servers!**

- ◆ All altar servers are **required** to bring all vessels, books, etc. back to sacristy! Do not carry more than 1 or 2 items at a time. Do not stack the ciborium's since this can chip the gold lining.
- ◆ Blow out candles carefully.  
DO NOT BLOW TOWARDS THE ALTAR CLOTH WHEN BLOWING OUT WAX CANDLES!!
- ◆ **Do not take off the alb until everything is done!** (Don't expect someone else to take care of your responsibilities!)
- ◆ Hang up the alb and cross (*the way you found them*) when done!

# Church

## Altar Setup

1). [Cross/Book] Bring over the *priest's book* (Roman Missal), and place on left side of the altar.

2). [Altar] From the credence table, bring over the *priest's chalice* (with key on top), and place on the altar.

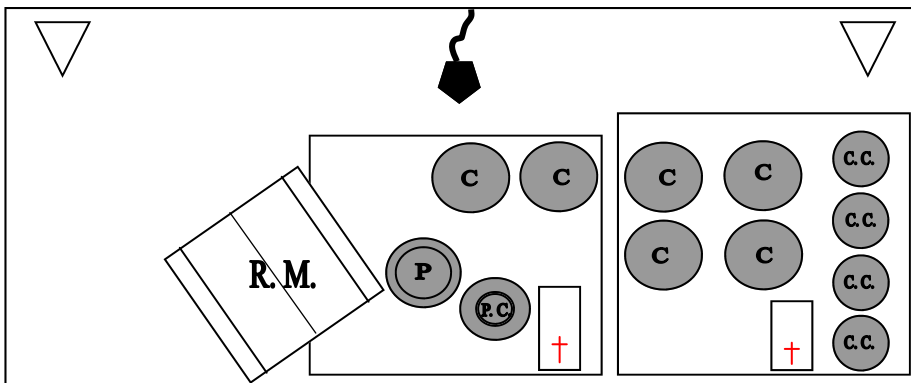
(If servers need to set up the altar) - Remove the *key*, and place to the side. Take the *corporal*, unfold it in the middle of the altar, keeping the red cross closest to you.

Place the *pall* off to the side. Place the *paten* (P) in the center of the corporal near the red cross. Place the *priest's purificator* to the far right side of the *paten*. Place the *chalice* (P.C.) next to the *paten*.

3). [Altar] Bring the *ciboria* (C) over to the altar, and place on the altar as shown below.

4). [Altar] Bring the *Cups for Precious Blood* (c.c.) to the side of the altar, and place as shown below. Bring the *purificators* to the altar, and place on the left side of the *Cups for Precious Blood*.

5). [Altar] After receiving the gifts, bring the *ciboria* to the altar, remove the lid, and place on *corporal* in front of chalice. Bring the *decanter/flagon* to the altar, remove the lid, and place next to *priest's purificator*.



# Credence Table Setup (Church)

When setting up the credence table, altar servers *must* walk through the back hallway. *Do not* walk across the sanctuary.

- 1). Bring the *priest's chalice* to the credence table. Place the *priest's chalice* on the left side of the table, closest to you.
- 2). Bring over the *water cruet*, and place on the left side of the credence table, behind the *priest's chalice*.
- 3). Bring the *Cups for Precious Blood* to the credence table, and place them two-by-two in the middle of the table, towards the back.
- 4). Bring the *ciboria* to the credence table, placing them side-by-side in the front, middle part of the table.
- 5). Bring the two *hand-sanitizers* over to the credence table, placing them side-by-side, next to the *ciboria*.
- 6). Bring the *pitcher and bowl* to the credence table, and place on the right side towards the back. (Leave the pitcher in the bowl).
- 7). Bring the *purificators* and the *fingertip towel* over to the credence table, and place on the right side closest to you.

## Remember

- before and after Mass -

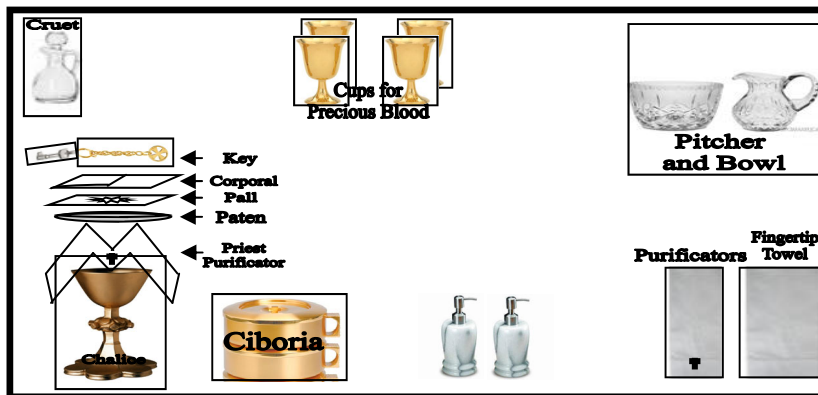
*genuflect to the tabernacle when you enter/exit the sanctuary*

*(you do not need to genuflect if you are carrying something)*

- during Mass -

*bow to the altar when you cross the sanctuary*

*(you do not need to bow if you are carrying something)*



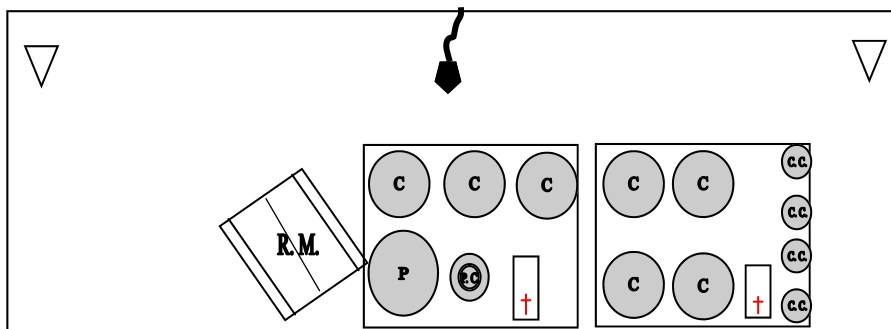
# Holy Family Center

## Altar Setup

- 1). [Cross/Book] Bring over the priest's *book* (R.M.), and place on left side of the altar.
- 2). [Altar] From the credence table, bring over the priest's *chalice* (with key on top), and place on the altar.  

(If servers need to set up the altar) - Remove the *key*, and place to the side. Take the *corporal*, unfold it in the middle of the altar, keeping the red cross closest to you.

Place the *pall* off to the side. Place the *paten* (P) in the center of the corporal near the red cross. Place the *priest's purificator* to the far right side of the paten. Place the *chalice* (P.C.) next to the paten.
- 3). [Altar] Bring the *ciboria* (C) over to the altar, and place on the altar as shown below.
- 4). [Altar] Bring the *Cups for Precious Blood* (c.c.) to the side of the altar, and place as shown below. Bring the *purificators* to the altar, and place on the left side of the *Cups for Precious Blood*.
- 5). [Altar] After receiving the gifts, bring the *ciboria* to the altar, remove the lid, and place on corporal in front of chalice. Bring the *decanter/flagon* to the altar, remove the lid, and place next to *priest's purificator*.



## Credence Table Setup (HFC)

- 1). First, bring the *priest's chalice* to the credence table. Place the *priest's chalice* on the left side of the table, closest to you.
- 2). Bring over the *water cruet*, and place on the left side of the credence table, behind the *priest's chalice*.
- 3). Bring the *ciborium* to the credence table, placing them side-by-side in the middle part of the table.
- 4). Bring the *Cups for Precious Blood* to the credence table, and place them side-by-side on the right side of the table towards the back.
- 5). Bring the *pitcher and bowl* to the credence table, and place on the right side towards the middle/back part of the table. (Leave the pitcher in the bowl).
- 6). Bring the *purificators* and the *fingertip towel* over to the credence table, and place on the right side closest to you.

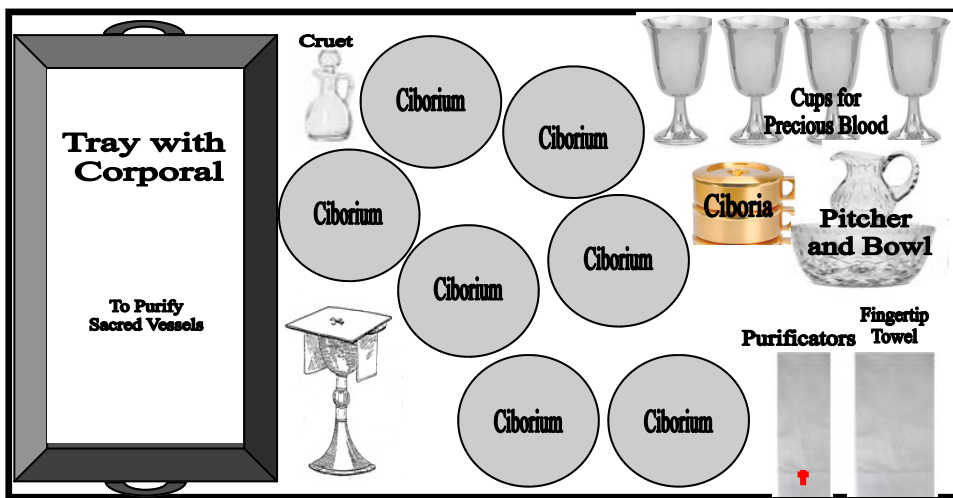
### Remember

- before and after Mass -

*genuflect to the tabernacle when you enter/exit the sanctuary*  
(you do not need to genuflect if you are carrying something)

- during Mass -

*bow to the altar when you cross the sanctuary*  
(you do not need to bow if you are carrying something)



## **Scheduling**

Since we are a very large parish, it was necessary to implement a scheduling program. We will need an active e-mail address in order to put you in the system to be scheduled.

### **Logging In:**

Log-In link to "Web Terminal" is available via the parish website at [www.st-bernards.org](http://www.st-bernards.org)

The "Minister Sign-In" link is located at the top of the home page.

Each person (minister) will have their own username and password (sent via introductory email). Once logged in you may change your password.

Family members will be able to "toggle" back and forth between each family member.

If you are unable to make any of your scheduled services, please request a substitute so that someone else can fill your important role.

### **Requesting a Substitute:**

Click on "My Schedule" tab.

Click "Request Sub" next to the day in which you are unable to serve.

Providing a comment or reason for needing a sub is optional.

Press "Request sub" to send.

Your sub request will only be sent (via email) to those who are qualified to fill that position and who are available to serve on that day and time.

You will be notified via email when someone volunteers to fill your request. The live schedule will be automatically updated to reflect the changes.

If additional people volunteer to fill position after it has already been filled, they will receive an immediate response saying position is already filled.

(If you are unable to serve, make sure that you request for a substitute. It is the servers responsibility to make sure that the position has been filled).

### **Exporting Schedule to your Google or Outlook Calendar:**

Click on "My Schedule" tab.

To export schedule to your personal calendar, click the Google or Outlook calendar icon and follow the log-in prompts.

To have your schedule automatically download into your iPhone or Android phone calendar, log into the Web Terminal via your iPhone or Android phone, click on the My Schedule Tab. Then click on the "Export to Google or iPhone" calendar icon and follow the prompts.

There is also a Ministry Scheduler Pro app for iPhone available for free download from the App Store. Android app will be available soon.

### **Email & Text Message Reminders:**

The system is automatically set up to send you an email reminder 4 days prior to your scheduled service date. This should allow you ample time to request a sub if necessary. If you wish to change the email reminder setting, go to the "My Profile" tab and adjust accordingly.

If you wish to receive a text message reminder two hours prior to your scheduled service time, go to the "My Profile" tab and enter your cell number (including area code) in the cell number field. Check the box that says "Send me text message reminder..."

### **BE SURE TO PRESS "SUBMIT" AFTER MAKING ANY CHANGES TO YOUR PROFILE**

If you have any questions, please contact the Liturgical Directors office.

Thank you so much for your service.

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Technical Terms:**

- ◆ Advent- the liturgical season of four weeks devoted to preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas.
- ◆ Easter Triduum- three day celebration of devotions, prayer, and preaching; (*Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday*).
- ◆ Genuflection- is an act of reverence made by touching the right knee to the ground.
- ◆ Invocation- when the priest holds his hands over the bread and wine.
- ◆ Lent- the liturgical season of forty days which begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (Easter Triduum).
- ◆ Profound Bow- bowing from the waist.
- ◆ Simple Bow- bowing from the shoulders.
- ◆ Reverence- honor or respect felt or shown.
- ◆ Sanctuary- the part of a church set apart for the principal rites of worship.
- ◆ Elevation of Host - the Body of Christ - when the priest raises up the Host.
- ◆ Elevation of Chalice- the Blood of Christ - when the priest raises up the chalice.
- ◆ Opening Prayer- prayer beginning the Mass.
- ◆ Closing Prayer- prayer that concludes the Mass.

### **Books:**

- ◆ Book of Gospels- the book containing all the Gospels for the Sundays of the Church Year.
- ◆ Lectionary- the book containing all the readings for Mass.
- ◆ Roman Missal- the book containing all the prayers for Mass.



## **Linens:**

- ◆ Altar Cloth- the white cloth covering the altar.
- ◆ Corporal- square linen that is placed on the middle of the altar cloth.
- ◆ Finger Towel- towel used by the priest to dry his hands.
- ◆ Funeral Pall- covers the casket at funerals.
- ◆ Pall- stiff, square, white cover that is placed over the chalice to keep bugs out.
- ◆ Purificator- the folded linen used to care for the Precious Blood.

## **Furnishings:**

- ◆ Altar- table for the Sacrifice of the Mass - the table in the center of the sanctuary.
- ◆ Ambo- where the Word of God is proclaimed.
- ◆ Credence table- small table for holding the sacred vessels.
- ◆ Gift table- table in back of church/worship space where the bread and wine are placed before Mass.
- ◆ Paschal Candle- large, white Easter candle.
- ◆ Presider's Chair- the priest's chair in the sanctuary.
- ◆ Processional Cross- cross carried by the server in procession.
- ◆ Processional Candles- candles carried in procession.
- ◆ Tabernacle- the receptacle in the church in which the consecrated Eucharist is reserved.
- ◆ Sanctuary Lamp- the wax candle that burns constantly near the tabernacle.

## **Vestments:**

- ◆ Alb- white ankle length garment worn by priests, deacons and altar servers.
- ◆ Dalmatic- a rectangular garment with sleeves worn sometimes by deacons.
- ◆ Chasuble- Round outer vestment worn by a priest at Mass. The color of this vestment corresponds to the liturgical season.
- ◆ Cincture- rope belt worn with an alb.
- ◆ Stole- narrow strip of cloth worn over the alb by priest and deacons. Priests wear the stole over the front and deacons wear it to the side.

## **Vessels:**

- ◆ Aspergillum- the device used to sprinkle holy water.
- ◆ Chalice- cup for holding the Precious Blood.
- ◆ Ciborium- the metal dish or bowl that holds the smaller hosts.
- ◆ Communion Cup- smaller chalice used to distribute the Precious Blood to the people.
- ◆ Cruet- small container holding water or wine.
- ◆ Flagon/Decanter- larger glass container in which the wine is placed.
- ◆ Holy Water Pot- for use with the Aspergillum.
- ◆ Incense Boat- metal vessel containing the incense.
- ◆ Monstrance- the vessel in which the Consecrated Host is displayed during Benediction and Eucharistic Adoration.
- ◆ Paten- flat metal dish that holds the large host.
- ◆ Pitcher & Bowl- for washing the priest's hands.
- ◆ Thurible/Censer- metal vessel attached to a chain in which incense is burned.

## Notes



Your commitment to the altar is not only a duty, but a great honor, a genuine holy service. In connection with this service, I wish to propose some reflections to you.

The altar server's clothing is very special. It recalls the garment that each one puts on when he is welcomed in Jesus Christ in the community. I am referring to the baptismal gown, whose profound meaning Saint Paul clarifies: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Even if you, dear altar servers, can no longer fit into your baptismal gown, you have put on [the clothing] of altar servers. Yes, baptism is the point of departure of your "authentic liturgical service," which places you next to your bishops, priests and deacons.

In the liturgy, you are much more than simple "helpers of the parish priest." Above all, you are servers of Jesus Christ, of the eternal High Priest. Thus, you, altar servers, are called in particular to be young friends of Jesus. Be determined to go deeper and to cultivate this friendship with him. You will discover that in Jesus you have found a true friend for life.

The altar server often has a candlestick in his hand. How can one not think of that which Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Your service cannot be limited to the inside of a church. It must shine in everyday life: in school, in the family, and in different realms of society. Because, whoever wishes to serve Jesus Christ inside a church must be his witness everywhere.

Dear young people! Your contemporaries wait for the real "light of the world" (see John 1:9). Do not hold your candlestick only inside a church, but carry the light of the Gospel to all those who are in darkness and are living through a difficult time in their life.

I have spoken of friendship with Jesus. How happy I would be if something more sprang from this friendship! How beautiful it would be if some of you were to discover a vocation to the priesthood! Jesus Christ has urgent need of youths who will be at his disposition with generosity and no reservations. Moreover, might not the Lord also call one or two of you girls to embrace the consecrated life to serve the Church and the brothers and sisters? Even for those who wish to be united in marriage, the service of altar servers teaches that a real union must always include readiness for reciprocal and free service.

-Pope St. John Paul II

General Audience, August 1, 2001, the 1,000th of his pontificate