

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish  
P.O. Box 719  
Seaford, DE 19973

Parish Office:  
(302) 629-3591



# Altar Server

## Guidebook

### Facilitators:

**Nicholas and Christine Lombardi**

**(302) 933-0205 (home)**

**(302) 236-2234 (Nick's cell)**

**(302) 236-2257 (Christine's cell)**

**[lombfam@mchsi.com](mailto:lombfam@mchsi.com)**

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# Introduction

## *The Altar Server's Charge*

As you accept the honor and privilege of becoming an Altar Server for Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, you acknowledge that you are now a member of the Altar Server Ministry. Your duty as an Altar Server is to assist the Priest(s) and Deacon(s) at the holy Mass. In performing your duties, you will have the tremendous privilege of being in the Sanctuary and at the Altar of our Lord. With the honor and privilege bestowed upon you as members of the Altar Server Ministry, comes a responsibility to act with reverence at all times; to be alert and ready to assist our Priest(s) and Deacon(s). Please be ever mindful that you are to participate in the Mass, to pray, to sing and to worship as you give the gift of your time and service to our Church.

## A Prayer for Altar Servers

*Loving Father,*

*Creator of the universe,*

*You call your people to worship,*

*to be with you and each other at Mass.*

*Please help me to serve You,*

*for You have called me to this ministry of Altar Service.*

*Keep me prayerful and alert.*

*Help me to help others in prayer.*

*Thank you for the trust You have placed in me.*

*Keep me true to that trust.*

*This I pray in Jesus' name,*

*who is with us in the Holy Spirit.*

*Amen.*

## The Dress of an Altar Server

- † Please take care to dress carefully and conservatively when you are serving at the Mass.
  
- † You will wear the vestments of an Altar Server.
  - Alb
  - Cincture
    - The Cincture is tied in a loose knot and should hang to the right of your Alb.
    - The color of your Cincture will be noted for you on the Altar Server bulletin board.
  
  - Of course you should be clean, well groomed and clean-shaven.
  
- † Dress shoes are preferred (no flip flops)

### ***Did You Know?***

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*The white **Alb** symbolizes purity and is a reminder of our Baptism.*

*The **Cincture** is a symbol of wisdom, strength and spiritual watchfulness.*

## Preparation for the Mass

It is both an honor and a privilege to serve at the Altar of our Lord. If you are always mindful of the special duty you are performing, you will be guided to be reverent and respectful at all times during your service.

- † Please arrive at least fifteen minutes before Mass begins.
- † Sign in on the Altar Server schedule.
- † Dress in your Alb and Cincture.
- † Review the Mass checklist.
  - Light the Candles
  - Set the Books
  - Determine if there are any special requirements
    - Incense
    - Holy Water
    - Palm Fronds
- † Working with the other Servers, determine who will serve as:
  - The Book Server
  - The Bell Server
  - Be responsible for the Incense and Holy Water
- † The Book Server should touch base with the Priest to see if there are any special needs for the Mass.
- † Please be as quiet as possible in the Sacristy, as the Priest(s) and Deacon(s) use this time to prepare for the Mass.

# Protocol

- † Your posture should be one of grace and reverence. Unless you are holding something in your hands, hands should be folded in the prayer position, or placed upon your lap, if sitting.
- † Please take care to sit up straight and tall, with both feet planted on the floor.
- † If you are unable to attend a Mass for which you have been scheduled, please contact Mrs. Lombardi as soon as possible so she may arrange for a substitute.
- † No drinking or eating is allowed in the Sacristy or in the Sanctuary. No gum chewing, please.
- † Please have the Gather Hymnal and the Missalets out and ready to use during Mass.
- † Be alert and pay attention.
  - By paying attention, you will be able to anticipate what the Priest or Deacon needs next.
  - Be watchful, as the priest may signal you for help.
- † Participate in the Mass
  - Pray
  - Sing
  - Listen to the readings and the homily

## Serving at Mass

### *The Entrance Procession*

- † You will leave the Sacristy when Father is ready, or when instructed to go by the Priest.
- † Remember to bow every time you pass in front of the Altar, and genuflect every time you pass in front of the Tabernacle.
- † The Procession forms at the back of the Church.
- † The order of the Procession is:
  - The Altar Servers
  - The Deacon, if present
  - The Concelebrants, if present
  - The Priest
- † When the congregation begins to sing the opening hymn, the Altar Servers walk slowly down the center aisle.
- † Walk with reverence, at a slow and even pace, with your hands in the prayer position.

#### *Did You Know?*

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*Genuflecting is a gesture of adoration.*

*Bowing is a gesture of profound respect and reverence.*

## *Arriving at the Altar of Our Lord*

- † Arriving at the Altar line up
  - The Bell Server to the left of the Priest
  - The Book Server to the right of the Priest
- † Wait for Father to lead you up on the Sanctuary. You will bow slightly, and then proceed to the Sanctuary.
- † Please move up on to the Sanctuary as follows:
  - The Book Server will sit to the left of the Priest.
  - The Bell Server will sit to the right of the Priest if there is no Deacon serving. If we have a Deacon serving, please sit next to the Credence table.
  - Remember to continue to stand until after the Opening Rite is concluded
  - When you see Father sit, please be seated.

## *The Opening Rite*

- † Our service begins with the Penitential Rite, and is then usually followed by the Gloria.
- † The Book Server will listen for the cue near the end of the Gloria, when you will hear the Priest say "***For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord***" you will get ready.
- † Please open the Sacramentary no later than when you hear Father say "***Let us Pray***". (*It is fine to get the book in your lap and mark the opening page with your finger, so that it is easier to manage*).
  - The Book will be marked with a ribbon where you will open the pages.
  - It is a good idea to get the book in your lap during the Gloria, and mark your place with your finger.
  - Please stand to the right of Father with the Book held up still and flat so he can easily read it.
  - Take care not to block the Book's writing with your fingers.
  - After the opening prayer, replace the Sacramentary on the book stand on the Altar.
- † After the opening rite, be seated when you see Father sit.

## *The Reading of God's Holy Word*

- † You will be seated for the:
  - The First Reading
  - The Responsorial Psalm
  - The Second Reading (but please pay attention and get ready)
  
- † As soon as the second reading is complete, both servers should prepare to stand.
  
- † When you hear the Alleluia begin you will stand up, (be prepared to stand when the Priest stands).
  
- † The Servers will each get a candle and slowly and reverently make their way to the front of the Altar. The Priest/Deacon will center himself at the front of the Altar, and all will bow and proceed to the pulpit, where the Gospel will be read. The Bell Server will stand to the right of the pulpit and the Book Server will stand to the left of the pulpit. Please line up using the Lectern as your guide; your foot nearest to the congregation should be lined up with the backside of the Lectern.
  
- † Please take care to hold your candle straight up. (Do not make the sign of the three-part cross, while holding the candles).
  
- † Stand straight and still, you are lighting the way for the Congregation to hear God's Holy Word.
  
- † After the reading of the Gospel, replace your candle. The Book Server will return to his/her seat. The Bell Server should seat himself/herself near the Credence table.
  
- † All servers should sit down together, at the same time.
  
- † The Priest will begin the Homily.

## *The Offertory*

- † The Offertory begins right after the Prayers of the Faithful.
- † As the offering begins, the Altar Servers will prepare the Altar by placing the Chalices, Sacramentary, etc. on the Altar.
- † Near the end of the offering, both Altar Servers will retrieve the candles, bow at the front of the Altar, and line up in the middle of the center isle to await the presentation of the gifts and offering.
- † The Altar Servers will lead the procession up to the Altar **reverently and at a slow pace** and replace the candles.
- † The Priest will hand the offering to the server to his left, and the server should place the basket in the Sacristy – and return.
- † The Priest will hand the cruets of wine and water to the server on his right, and that server should position him/herself right of the Altar.
- † Once the Priest places the ciborium on the Altar, the left server will join the other server on the right side of the Altar (always bowing in front of the Altar).
- † Father will fill the Chalice with wine and water and return the cruets to the server. Both servers should proceed to the Credence table and return the empty wine cruet. The Book Server will hold the water cruet and Lavabo bowl. The Bell Server should drape the finger towel over his/her left arm. Both servers should return to the Altar.
- † Father will hold the Host up in blessing and then he will hold up the Chalice for blessing. He will then step back from the Altar and bow. As Father steps back from the Altar, the two servers will assist Father in washing his hands.

- † Father will place his hands over the bowl; the server holding the cruet of water will pour plenty of water, so that Father can easily wash his hands.
  
- † Father will then dry his hands on the towel and hand back the towel. Bow to Father; then return the towel, cruet and Lavabo bowl to the Credence table and return to stand in front of your chairs next to the Credence table.

***Did You Know?***

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*When the Priest washes his hands, he makes a conscious effort in washing and praying to free himself from any attachment to sin before offering and receiving the Eucharist.*

## *The Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist*

- † As Communion begins and after "Holy, Holy", all will kneel. The servers will all be on the right side of the Altar, and will kneel on the kneeler.
- † Then you will see the Priest stretch out his hands over the gifts.
- † When Father raises the host, the Bell Server will ring the bells for the count of three - let the bells finish ringing before putting them back on the kneeler.
- † And then when Father raises the Chalice, the Bell Server will ring the bells for the count of three before replacing the bells on the kneeler.
- † After the Great Amen, all will stand to say the Lord's Prayer and then give the sign of Peace.
- † Servers should give the sign of peace only to those immediately around you in the Sanctuary.
- † The Extraordinary Ministers will come up to the Sanctuary, where they will receive communion and then they (or Father) will give you communion. Please make a slight bow before you receive the Eucharist and the sign of the cross after receiving – return to the kneeler.
- † After communion is completed, the Priest will then cleanse the Chalices and Ciboria, and both servers should help clear the Altar to the Credence table.
- † All should remain kneeling until the Priest is seated and the tabernacle is secure, then you may also be seated.

### ***Did You Know?***

*Ringing the bells three times symbolizes the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

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- † When Father has completed the cleansing of the Chalices and Ciboria, Father and the servers (just the Book Server if Deacon is present) will cross over to the other side of the Sanctuary.
- † The Book Server will get ready to open the Book of the Sacramentary for the closing prayer. (Your cue is Father saying "Let us Pray".)
- † After the blessing Father or the Deacon will say "***Mass has ended, go in peace***".
- † Wait for Father to move, then Proceed to the front of the Altar with the Priest. The Servers and the Priest (& Deacon) will bow at the Altar and process out:
  - The Altar Servers first
  - The Deacon
  - The Priest
- † When you reach the back of the Church, please turn and bow slightly to Father, before proceeding back to the Sacristy.

## **After Mass**

- † After the processional at the end of Mass, you will return to the Sacristy, using the isle to the far left.
- † Remember to move slowly and quietly back to the Sacristy.
- † Please help to carry all items off of the Credence table back to the Sacristy.
- † The servers should extinguish the candles using the snuffer.
- † Back in the Sacristy, please return your Alb to the proper place in the closet (by its size) and replace your Cincture.
- † Check with Father to see if any thing else needs to be done.

**Thank you for your service to the Mass!**

# The Sacred Vessels and Vestments of the Mass



**Alb**



**Aspergillum/Sprinkler & Holy  
Water Bucket**



**Chalice**



**Chasuble**



**Ciborium**



**Cincture**



**Cruets**



**Lavabo Bowl & Pitcher  
(for the Hand Washing)**



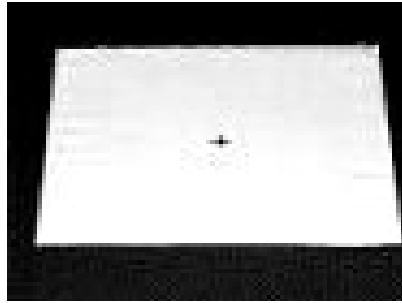
**Lectern/Pulpit**

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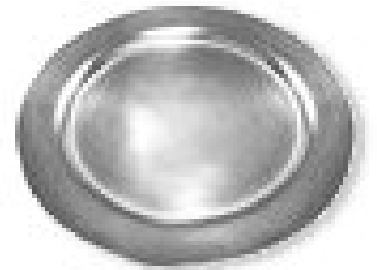
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**Monstrance**



**Pall**



**Paten**



**Purificator**



**Pyx**



**Sacramentary**



**Thurible/Censor & Boat**