



Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church

3700 CANYON ROAD

LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO 87544

ALTAR SERVER INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVING MASS

September 27, 2015

based on the Third Edition of the Roman Missal

“In the Most Holy Eucharist, Mother Church with steadfast faith acknowledges the Sacrament of redemption, joyfully takes it to herself, celebrates it and reveres it in adoration, proclaiming the death of Christ Jesus and confessing his Resurrection until he comes in glory to hand over, as unconquered Lord and Ruler, eternal Priest and King of the Universe, a kingdom of truth and life to the immense majesty of the Almighty Father.”
(Redemptionis Sacramentum)

Questions: contact Deacon John Sutton at (505) 672-1607, Christopher Lee at (503) 730-5783, or talk to a priest or deacon.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Serving the Mass is a very special privilege in which you assist the priest in the celebration of the Eucharist. During every single Mass, all the Saints and angels are present, adoring and reverencing our Lord. Altar servers have a duty to be an example to all the faithful gathered in the church, showing reverence and love for Christ. Mass is a solemn occasion that brings us such great joy in remembering that our Lord died on the cross to save us.

“In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims...”

(Sacrosanctum Concilium)

- **Remain reverent for the entirety of the Mass. Reverence is conveyed by your appearance, actions, and attention toward the Mass and tabernacle.**
 - Wear dress pants (or skirt) and dress shoes to serve. Black is preferable. Do not wear heels, flip-flops, or tennis shoes. Wear a white or solid-colored shirt; patterns and stripes can show through the alb. Remember, you are serving the holy sacrifice of the Mass so you should wear your Sunday best.
 - Hair should be clean and combed. Preferably, long hair should be put up or tied back.
 - Be quiet, and pay attention to what Father or the deacon is doing when sitting or standing. Do not look around at the congregation, fidget, play with your belt or cross, or nudge your neighbor.
 - Servers follow along with the people during Mass (sit, stand, kneel) unless they are up to perform an altar serving task.
 - **Hands: while walking, standing, or kneeling, keep hands together in the praying position with thumbs crossed. While sitting, place hands flat on your thighs.** While carrying an object in one hand (such as the water cruet), place your free hand flat on your chest over your heart.
 - It is okay to open the hymnal and sing along with the congregation when you do not have server duties to perform (such as after communion).
 - Enter into prayer during the Mass, but remain attentive to the priest or deacon.
 - The priest or deacon may need a server for a special task at any point during the Mass. If they signal to you, go to them and they will tell you what they need. You may need to retrieve Father’s homily, bring new batteries for the microphone, grab additional purificators, etc. It is okay to open the hymnal and sing along with the congregation when you do not have server duties to perform (such as after communion).
- The cross-bearer is also the Missal-bearer. The Missal is the book of prayers. The cross-bearer is always in the middle whenever the three servers are sitting, standing, or walking.
- The candle-bearers should always stay on the same side of the church during Mass. That is, if you are on the side of the cross-bearer closer to the Joseph statue during the procession, you should be seated on the Joseph side during the Mass. This server will ring the bells during the Eucharistic Prayer. The other candle-bearer is on the Mary side.
- Walk with a slow, dignified pace when moving about performing your duties during the Mass. Do not rush. Many people can see you, so do not fool around.
- If a server makes a mistake or forgets what to do, it is okay. Help the server in a friendly way, or perform the task for them. It is okay to whisper how to complete the task. The priest or deacon can always help you as well.

- If a server does your duty by mistake, you should simply do his/her duty without comment or commotion.
- Act like you know what you are doing, even if you are unsure. The congregation does not know exactly what you are supposed to be doing, so make your actions look confident and you will not cause distraction.

BEFORE MASS:

- **Scheduled servers may be replaced if not in the sacristy 10 minutes before Mass. Arrive early for any special instructions for that Mass.** Sign in on the sign-in sheet.
- Select an alb (white robe) that fits; it should come to within 2-4 inches off the floor (at your ankle). Only servers and other Mass participants should be in the sacristy getting ready for Mass.
- Tie the cincture (rope belt) around the waist with a square knot. Move the knot to your left side. Check with the priest or deacon for the correct color.
- Select a scapular (colored fabric) for the current liturgical season of the SAME SIZE as the alb. Raise the alb hood over your head and put on scapular.
- Place the cross around your neck and under the alb hood. Choose a cross that does not hang below your chest.
- If the processional candles are not in the sacristy, remove them from beside the altar, and bring them back to the sacristy (remember that when you first get to the sanctuary, face the tabernacle, genuflect, and make the sign of the cross). Light the two processional candles before leaving the sacristy for the start of Mass.
- The tallest server will carry the cross (cross-bearer) and the other two servers will carry the candles (candle-bearers) for the procession.
- The priest will say a short prayer before leaving the sacristy. Line up side-by-side in front of the priest and deacon, with the cross and candles, for the prayer.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

I. Introductory Rites

A. Entrance Procession

1. When the priest indicates, leave the sacristy and line up in the nave of the church for the entrance procession. Stand at the back of the left-center aisle (the one nearest the cry room).
2. The altar servers lead the procession with the cross bearer in the middle and in front. The candle-bearers follow side by side slightly behind the cross-bearer.
3. **After the entrance music starts**, when the people start singing, begin walking to the front of church. Walk slower than a normal walk.
4. Stop just outside the raised sanctuary, in front of the altar with the cross-bearer lined up with the center of the altar, and the candle-bearers on either side of him. Pause for two seconds and bow your head as a sign of reverence.
5. The cross-bearer enters the sanctuary first, walks to the right of the altar and places the cross in the stand to the right of the Tabernacle. Make sure the figure of Christ faces out toward the people. The candle-bearers enter the sanctuary on both sides and place the candles in the stands beside the altar.
6. All servers go to the seating area but remain standing with the congregation. The cross-bearer is in the middle and the other servers sit on either side. Candle-bearers remain on the same side of the church they were on during the procession (i.e. the Joseph statue side and Mary statue side). This is the seating arrangement for the entire Mass.
7. Bow toward the altar if you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.

B. Greeting – begins with the sign of the cross

C. Penitential Rite – the people acknowledge their sins and repent

D. Kyrie – “Lord have mercy / Christ have mercy / Lord have mercy,” or “Kyrie eleison / Christe eleison / Kyrie eleison”

E. Gloria – sing or say “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will...”

F. Opening Prayer

1. **When the “Amen” is sung near the end of the Gloria**, the cross-bearer brings the Missal to the priest for the opening prayer. The goal is to have the Missal to the priest before he says “Let us pray.” (Note: during the seasons of Advent and Lent the Gloria is omitted. After the Penitential Rite, when the second “Lord have mercy (Kyrie eleison)” is sung (spoken), the cross-bearer brings the Missal

to the priest). Bow toward the altar as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.

2. Open the Missal to the opening prayer when you arrive, and hold it off to your left side so you are not between the priest and the congregation. Do not open the book while you are walking. Hold the book at chest height for the priest, and make sure the pages are not shadowed. If you are not able to easily open the book for the priest, just bring it to him and he will open it.
3. After the prayer, the server returns with the Missal to his seat. Bow toward the altar as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.

II. Liturgy of the Word

A. First Reading

B. Responsorial Psalm

C. Second Reading

D. Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation

1. **When the Alleluia begins and the deacon rises**, the candle-bearers arise and get their candles (note: the 'Alleluia' is replaced with a Gospel Acclamation during Lent). Stand on the Joseph statue side of the altar, facing the congregation, and wait for the deacon. There is no need to rush, so wait patiently. Bow toward the altar if you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.
2. The deacon goes to the altar and gets the Book of the Gospels and walks toward the servers.
3. When the deacon reaches the servers, the candle-bearers start the procession. Step straight down from the sanctuary (do not cut corners), pass in front of the altar, and re-enter the sanctuary on the Mary statue side of the ambo. The server who was seated closest to the Mary statue should be on the Mary statue side of the ambo, and the server who was seated closest to the Joseph statue should be on the Joseph statue side of the ambo and should go around the back of the ambo.
4. Take positions on either side of the ambo, facing the deacon in the middle. Hold the candles up at the same height. Stand straight and still. Do not tip or play with the candles.

E. Gospel

1. After the Gospel, both servers return their candles to the stands and go to their seats. All three servers should sit at the same time. Bow toward the altar as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.

F. Homily - The priest or deacon delivers the Homily

G. Creed / Profession of Faith – “I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth...” Make a profound bow during the words “...**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**”

H. General Intercessions / Prayer of the Faithful – “... Lord, graciously hear us”

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist

A. Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts – Offertory song begins and gifts are brought forward

1. **When the deacon or priest rises to prepare the altar**, all three server rise and head toward the credence table. All three bow toward the altar together as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar. The cross-bearer brings the Missal to the altar and hands it to the deacon or priest, then goes to the credence table.
2. Bring the items from the credence table to the deacon; do not set them on the altar. The items should be brought in this order:
 - a. Chalice with its purificator, the Paten and the Corporal stacked together, Do not take the stack apart.
 - b. Communion cups
 - c. Cruet of water
 - d. Purificators
3. After the altar is prepared, stand side by side (with cross-bearer in the middle) behind the altar and wait until the priest and deacon go to receive the gifts. When the priest and deacon bow to the altar the servers should bow with them. Follow them and stand in the sanctuary just behind them.
4. When the deacon or priest hands you one of the gifts, return to the altar but wait to hand it to the deacon (or priest if there is no deacon); do not place it on the altar yourself. Generally, only 2 servers will receive gifts (the chalice and the communion plate full of hosts). The 3rd server may receive the collection basket, which should be placed at the foot of the server's pew. If you are not handed any gifts, follow the other servers back to the altar.
5. The cross-bearer should stand on the Mary statue side of the altar to wait for the water cruet. The cross-bearer returns cruet to the credence table once the comingling (drop of water added to wine in the chalice) is complete. The candle-bearers get the bowl of water and towel from the credence table. The candle-bearers should stand behind and on the Mary statue side of the priest; do not crowd the priest. The towel should be opened up and held with both hands and offered to the priest after he washes his hands. Bow heads slightly to the priest and return water and towel to the credence table.
6. Return to seats and sit if congregation is currently sitting; otherwise, remain standing. All three bow toward the altar together as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.

- B. Sanctus – “*Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts...*”
- C. Eucharistic Prayer – *while kneeling, we await the consecration of the Body and Blood of Christ*
1. Bells are rung during the Epiclesis and consecration to remind us of the awesome work of God in the transformation of simple bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. See Appendix A for the texts of each Eucharistic Prayer.
 2. **At the Epiclesis, as the priest extends his hands over the gifts,** the server closest to the bells rings (shakes) them once. Let the bells sound for about 5 seconds before placing them back on the pillow.
 3. **After the words of consecration,** the same server rings the bells three times. The priest elevates the bread and the wine above his head after they have been consecrated. Begin the first ring right after the words of consecration have ended, before the priest elevates the species. Ring the bells hard; pause 2 seconds; ring the bells hard again; pause 2 seconds; ring the bells hard a third time. The bells are rung for the consecration of both the bread into the Body of Christ and the wine into the Blood of Christ. Let the bells sound for about 5 seconds after the third ring before placing them back on the pillow.

IV. Communion Rite

- A. Lord's Prayer – “*Our Father, who art in heaven...*” The servers do not hold hands or extend their arms during the Lord's Prayer; this posture is reserved to the priest. Keep your hands folded reverently.
- B. Sign of Peace – “*Peace be with you; and with your spirit*”
1. **After sharing the sign of peace reverently** with fellow servers, the cross-bearer goes to the credence table and brings the communion plates to the altar, handing them to the priest or deacon. The server then takes the Missal from the altar and brings it back to the server pew. Bow toward the altar together as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.
- C. Breaking of the Bread / Agnus Dei / Lamb of God
- D. Communion – *reception of the Body of Christ by the faithful*
1. Communion will be brought to servers at their pew. You have the option of receiving kneeling or standing, and the option of receiving the Sacred Host on the tongue or in the hand. If in the hand, take care to check for any Particles of the Host remaining on your hands, if so, consume all Particles. Kneel and pray after reception of communion.
 2. Remain kneeling until after the priest places the blessed Hosts in the tabernacle. One altar server then goes to the credence table and takes the tray and water cruet to the altar. (The other servers remain kneeling in prayer.) The server at the altar waits for the Deacon to purify the vessels and place them on the tray.

Take the large plate and communion plates back to the credence table separately. When completed, bow to the Deacon and take the full tray carefully back to the credence table.

3. The server returns to the servers' pew, bowing in the middle to the altar, then all servers together sit down simultaneously.

E. Closing Prayer

1. **When the priest says 'Let us pray'** the cross-bearer brings the Missal to the priest for the Closing Prayer. Hold the Missal off to your left, at chest height for the priest. Open the Missal to the closing prayer. After the prayer, the server returns with the Missal to his seat. Bow toward the altar together as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.

V. Concluding Rite

A. Blessing – "... may almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit"

B. Dismissal – "... go in peace... Thanks be to God"

C. Recessional

1. **After the dismissal ("go in peace... thanks be to God")**, the cross-bearer removes the cross from the stand making sure the figure of Christ is facing forward.
2. The other servers accompany the cross-bearer, following behind him. Do not take the candles.
3. All three servers walk out of the sanctuary and into the left-center aisle (the Joseph statue side) with the cross-bearer in front. Walk about 4 pews up the aisle then turn and face the altar.
4. When the priest genuflects in front of the altar, the servers reverence with him. The cross-bearer remains standing straight, and the other servers genuflect. Turn around and continue walking up the aisle to the sacristy. The cross-bearer leads the way.

AFTER MASS:

- Place the crucifix in its holder. Servers together bow towards the crucifix.
- Remove your cincture and cross and place them in the drawer. Wrap the cord of the cross around the cross so that the crosses do not get tangled up in the drawer.
- Remove your scapular and alb and carefully hang them in the closet. Close the Velcro on your alb so it does not fall off the hanger. **Pick up any other albs/scapulars that have fallen off their hangers.**
- Discuss how the Mass went: were there any server tasks you were unsure of how to perform? Did you have any other questions?

APPENDIX A – EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

Bells have been rung as part of the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the church for more than 800 years. Sounding the bells is an audible sign of our joyous praise and thanksgiving. In the Epiclesis, the priest invokes the Holy Spirit to descend upon the gifts of bread and wine. During the Institution Narrative, the bread and wine are consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Epiclesis (part I):

Eucharistic Prayer I (usually only at Easter and very important Solemnities)

(The portion of this prayer before the Epiclesis is very long; the Epiclesis is *not* when the priest makes the Sign of the Cross over the gifts near the beginning of the prayer, but much later, when he extends two hands over the gifts and says:)

“Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ..”

Eucharistic Prayer II

“Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Eucharistic Prayer III (most common option on Sundays)

“Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.”

Eucharistic Prayer IV

“Therefore, O Lord, we pray: may this same Holy Spirit graciously sanctify these offerings, that they may become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ for the celebration of this great mystery, which he himself left us as an eternal covenant.”

Server Duty: The priest will use one of these four Epiclesis prayers. Ring the sanctus bells firmly ONCE during the Epiclesis *when the priest extends his hands over the gifts* (the bread and wine on the altar). If able, the deacon will also kneel at the Epiclesis. Ringing the bells “once” consists of shaking the bells with a twist of the wrist approximately 3 times. For some of these Eucharistic prayers (such as number II), the Epiclesis occurs only seconds after kneeling at the conclusion of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy...), so you must be paying attention!

Institution Narrative (part II):

Consecration of the Body of Christ:

“Take this, all of you, and eat of it: for this is my Body which will be given up for you.” († † †)

Consecration of the Blood of Christ:

“Take this, all of you, and drink from it: for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.” († † †)

Server Duty: Ring the sanctus bells firmly THREE times when the priest finishes saying the words of consecration, once for each dagger (†). Pause for 2 seconds between each ring.

I recommend that you study the Eucharistic Prayers and become familiar with when these verses occur. One place where you may find these texts is the following website:

<http://www.ibreviary.org/en/tools/ibreviary-web.html>

Appendix B – Summary of Cues/Procedures

- **After the entrance music starts**, when the people start singing, begin the entrance procession. Cross-bearer walks in front and candle-bearers follow. Pause in front of the altar and bow your head as a sign of reverence,. Place the cross and the candles in the stands.**When the first “Amen” is sung near the end of the Gloria**, the cross-bearer brings the Missal to the priest for the opening prayer. Bow as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar. Stand slightly to the priest’s left (your right), open the Missal to the opening prayer and hold the Missal in front of you, at chest height for the priest. During Lent and Advent this is done after the Kyrie since the Gloria is not sung.
- **When the Alleluia begins and the deacon rises**, the candle-bearers arise and get their candles for the Gospel procession. Walk slowly and do not play with the candles.**When the deacon or priest rises to prepare the altar**, the candle-bearers rise and head to the credence table. Bow as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar. The cross-bearer brings the Missal to the altar and hands it to the deacon or priest, then goes to the credence table.
 - Bring the items from the credence table to the deacon, starting with the chalice with corporal and paten on top, do not take them off. Do not bring the communion plates yet.
 - Follow the priest and deacon to help accept the gifts brought forward.
 - Cross-bearer waits beside the altar for the water cruet.
 - Candle-bearers hold the bowl and towel to wash the priest’s hands.
- **At the Epiclesis, as the priest extends his hands over the gifts**, the server closest to the bells rings (shakes) them once.
- **After the words of consecration**, the same server rings the bells three times. The bells are rung for the consecration of both the bread into the Body of Christ and the wine into the Blood of Christ.
- **After sharing the sign of peace** with fellow servers, the cross-bearer brings the communion plates to the altar and removes the Missal from the altar and brings it back to the server pew. Bow as you cross between the tabernacle and the altar.
- **When the priest says ‘Let us pray’** the cross-bearer brings the Missal to the priest for the Closing Prayer. Hold the Missal in front of you, at chest height for the priest.
- **After the dismissal (“go in peace... thanks be to God”)**, the cross-bearer removes the cross from the stand, and the servers walk to the left-center aisle (the Joseph statue side). The candle-bearers genuflect with the priest and the cross-bearer stands still. The cross-bearer leads the way back to the sacristy followed by the candle-bearers.

APPENDIX C – GLOSSARY:

- **Ambo:** the stand where the readings, Gospel and general intercessions are given
- **Chalice:** the priest's cup that holds the Blood of Christ
- **Communion Cups:** the other cups used to distribute the Blood of Christ
- **Communion Plates:** the dishes used to distribute the Body of Christ
- **Corporal:** the folded square white cloth that is spread out on the altar to collect any particles of Christ and goes under the paten and chalice
- **Cruet:** the small glass container that holds water
- **Genuflect:** a sign of reverence to God where you kneel on your right knee only
- **Missal:** (or "Roman Missal") the big red book that contains all the prayers of the Mass
- **Nave:** the part of the church where the congregation sits
- **Pall:** a square of stiffened linen used to cover the chalice at the Eucharist
- **Paten:** the small plate that holds the Body of Christ (specifically the large host)
- **Profound Bow:** a sign of reverence to God where you bend at the waist, making a right angle between your body and your legs
- **Purificators:** the folded cloths that are used to wipe the chalice and communion cups
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- **Sanctuary:** the raised area at the front of the church where the altar and tabernacle are located
- **Tabernacle:** the golden box or 'house' that retains the unconsumed consecrated hosts from Mass