

ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY
SAINT PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH
Pensacola, Florida

Altar Servers are male or female members of the congregation who assist the priests and deacons in the celebration of the Mass and other liturgical ceremonies, so the liturgy can be conducted with grace and reverence. Altar Servers are full and active participants in the Eucharist and have the added responsibility of being leaders of the assembly. During the liturgy, the altar server models the activity of the congregation by singing, praying, maintaining silence at the appropriate times to enhance the worship of the congregation. In general then, the role of the altar server is to help and pray.

To serve at the Altar of God is a privilege granted to boys, girls, men or women. To be an altar server at Saint Paul Parish, one must be at least entering the 5th grade.

ALTAR SERVER GUIDELINES

DRESS CODE

BOYS: Long pants, preferably black (no jeans, no shorts)

Solid, light-colored collared shirt, preferably white

Closed-toe dress shoes with socks, preferably black (no sandals, flip-flops, crocs, clogs, sneakers or running shoes)

GIRLS: Slacks, preferably black (no shorts or skirts)

Solid, light-colored top with a collar, preferably white (no tank tops, spaghetti straps)

Closed-toe shoes, preferably black (no sneakers, running shoes, crocs, sandals or clogs)

Altar servers who arrive out of compliance with this code will be unable to serve.

DEDICATION to the ministry and GENERAL GUIDELINES

This is a ministry that you perform for the church. It is part and parcel with the stewardship of all God has given you and involves the return of your time and talent. As such, your ministry should be a priority in your life. You should be dedicated to your ministry, arrive on time for your scheduled Masses, and perform to the very best of your ability.

The church is an area of quiet and prayer. Once inside the actual church, and especially in the Sanctuary, be quiet and prayerful. There should be no conversations except those directly relating to the celebration of the Mass or prayer.

Whenever you are in the Sanctuary, if you are seated, your hands should be folded in your lap, feet flat on the floor. When standing, unless you are holding something, your hands should be folded as in prayer. The lead servers should have their right arm by their side; left hand over their heart.

If during Mass, you feel ill quietly move off the Altar and into the sacristy. Do not move around in your chair, play with your cincture, fidget, talk, etc while in the Sanctuary. The whole congregation can see you, and it is a distraction that takes away from the Mass.

In general, the altar servers should sit and rise together, avoid crossing excessively behind the Altar, and when you do cross behind the Altar, bow toward the altar as a sign of respect toward Christ.

While in the Sanctuary, the lead servers (or if one is present, adult server) are in charge of making sure the other servers fulfill their roles.

SCHEDULING

The altar server schedule is generally written near the end of each month for the next month. **Prior** to the scheduler putting out the schedule, you should call to let him know you are going to be out of town, or will be otherwise unable to serve on a particular weekend. If you don't receive your copy in the mail, there is one in the blue altar server binder in the vestment room. Additionally, there is one for each 5th through 8th grade classroom in Saint Paul School. The schedule is mailed out in time for the first Mass of each month. The norm is two lead servers and three general servers. There may or may not be an adult server/seminarian.

The Scheduler for Saint Paul is: Seminarian Jim Grebe (850)212-0423
Email: grebej@stpaulcatholic.net

Once the schedule is mailed out, it is the scheduled server's responsibility to find a replacement if he or she can't serve as scheduled. There is a roster with phone numbers for all of the altar servers on the back of the schedule to assist you in finding a replacement when that eventuality arises.

If you subsequently decide that you do not want to continue in this ministry, please call Mr. Grebe and ask him to remove you from the server rotation. For the sake of the Liturgy it is important to have altar servers that are going to be dedicated to showing up faithfully and doing a good job rather than someone who is going to just "decorate" the Sanctuary.

ALTAR SERVER PROCEDURES FOR MASS

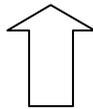
Before Mass: Arrive 15 minutes before Mass. This is important. Father is preparing for Mass, and does not have time to worry about whether or not you are going to show. The Altar Servers have vital preparations to make. If it is 5 minutes before Mass and you haven't shown, **you will not serve.** You may or may not be replaced. If you miss too many Masses, you will be removed from the ministry.

When you arrive, initial next to your name on the schedule in the Altar Server Binder in the vestment room. Once you have put on your alb (robe) and appropriate colored

cincture (belt) or cassock and surplice for the lead servers, ensure the candles on the altar are lit. The lead servers will help the younger servers light the torches (processional candles). One of the **lead servers** will check in with Father in the priests' vestment room for any last minute instructions. One of the lead servers will then lead the rest in the Altar Servers' Prayer from the card. Other than the lead server checking in with Father at the appropriate time, nobody is to go into the priests' vesting room. If there is a problem see the adult server/seminarian first. 3 minutes before Mass starts, the lead servers will ensure everyone is lined up in the back of the church to the left of the main entrance outside the confessional. Use the side aisles to bring the cross and torches to the back of the church. **Do not** come up the main aisle or the ambulatories (space between the columns on either side of the sanctuary and outside walls).

Entrance Procession: *Pay attention to the changes made here.*

PROCESSION ORDER



Lead Server 1 (thurifer when incense is used)

Torch 1

Cross

Torch 2

Lead Server 2

(Adult Server)

Deacon

Priest

When we use incense *and* when we do not, this is the procession order. *No longer will Lead Servers lead the procession at the beginning of Mass together.*

Lead Server 1 will lead the procession.

Behind lead server 1, the torches will line up *directly next to* the cross; *no longer will the torches go behind the cross.*

Behind the cross and torches will come lead server 2.

Procession Instructions for the **lead servers** when incense are used: Lead server 1 is the thurifer *and* the naviclarus. In other words, Lead Server 1 carries the thurible in his right hand and the boat in his left hand. Before the procession begins, Father blesses the incense. Lead server 1 hands the boat to Father and opens the thurible. Father then puts some incense into the thurible. Lead Server closes the thurible, then all assume the positions diagrammed above. The movement begins when the music begins; do not wait for the first sung note. Lead Server 1 goes to the choir side to place the boat in its place on the stand, and then stands with the thurible directly in front of his kneeler. When

Father is ready, hand him the thurible, and wait in front of the kneeler for Father to finish incensing the altar. When Father has finished, receive from Father the thurible, and hang it in its place on the stand. *Immediately, place a new charcoal in the thurible* to prepare for the Alleluia Gospel Acclamation. Then Lead Server 1 will go to his seat.

Lead Server 2, since he has nothing in his hands, genuflects when he reaches the end of the procession and goes to the baptistery side. He assists the general servers as needed with their torches, and then goes to his seat.

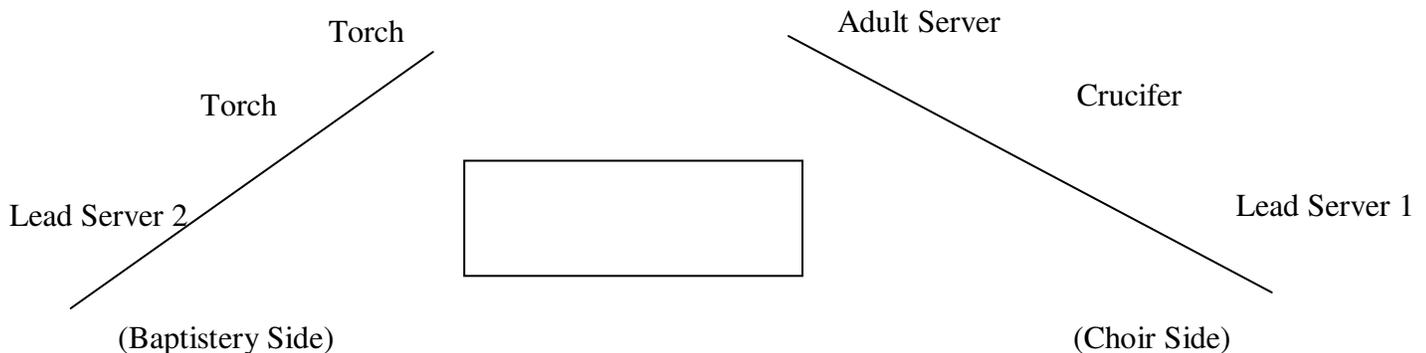
Procession Instructions for the **lead servers** when incense are not used: Lead server 1 leads the procession. He genuflects when he reaches the end, and goes to his seat on the choir side.

Lead server 2 genuflects when he reaches the end of the procession and goes to the baptistery side. He assists the general servers as needed with their torches, and then goes to his seat.

Procession Instructions for the **Crucifer**: When the crucifer reaches the end of the procession, together with the torchbearers, he hangs up the cross in its place on the baptistery side of the sanctuary. Then he crosses over to the choir side, bowing to the altar as he goes. He goes to his seat second from the right and is ready to bring the Sacramentary to Father.

Procession Instructions for the **Torchbearers**: When the torchbearers arrive at the front of the procession together with the cross, they go to the baptistery side of the sanctuary to place their torches in the appropriate place. They extinguish their torches and go to their seats on the baptistery side.

Seating: Once the procession is finished, the two torch bearers and lead server 2 should be on the baptistery side with lead server 1, the crucifer and adult server (if present) on the choir side.



Liturgy of the Word: After the Penitential Rite and the Gloria, the crucifer brings the Sacramentary to Father at the words: “Let us pray.” The crucifer returns to his or her seat with the Sacramentary and all of the servers are seated together.

During the first and second readings, the servers should listen attentively and respond to the Responsorial Psalms.

Thurifer instructions for the Liturgy of the Word: Since the charcoal was placed in the thurible before the Greeting, there is no need to move until the second reading is completed. At the words “Thanks be to God” after the second reading, bring the thurible and the boat to the seated priest and kneel. Do not wait for music to start. While kneeling in front of the priest, hand Father the boat. Open the thurible for Father while he places the incense in it. Close the thurible, stand, then receive the boat in your left hand. Proceed to your place behind the ambo and stand. Do not swing the thurible. After the Deacon or Priest announces “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to . . .,” he turns to you and you hand him the thurible. When he finishes incensing the book of the Gospel, receive from him the thurible, and stand in your place. Do not swing the thurible. Listen to the Gospel. Wait until the deacon has placed the Gospel on the Gospel throne and has started moving back to his seat before you begin to move back to the choir side. Place the boat on the stand in its place and hang the thurible from the stand. *Immediately* place a charcoal in the thurible to prepare for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Torchbearer Instructions for the Liturgy of the Word: After the words, “Thanks be to God” after the second reading, and at the instruction of Lead Server 2, get your torches and stand on either side of the altar in front of the candles, facing each-other. The priest or deacon gets the Book of the Gospels and stands between you. When he turns toward the ambo, turn and head toward the ambo as well, one before and one after, taking their places on either side of the ambo. After the priest or deacon says “The Gospel of the Lord,” he will kiss the Gospel and place it on the Gospel Throne. Then bring the torches back to the rack.

Lead Server 2 instructions for the Liturgy of the Word: during the second reading, light the torches for the torchbearers. Instruct the torch bearers to move to the altar after the second reading. Then listen to the Gospel. When the torchbearers return, assist them in extinguishing their candles and placing them on the rack.

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Offertory:

Instructions for the Crucifer and Torchbearers: *Immediately following the intercessions*, the crucifer moves from the choir side of the sanctuary to the baptistery side in order to retrieve the cross. On his or her way from the choir side of the sanctuary to the baptistery side, the crucifer will place the Sacramentary on the Altar. The crucifer and torchbearers go to the back of the church for the offertory procession. After the procession, the cross and torches go back into their racks.

The torchbearers are responsible for the washing of the hands. Torch 1 will hold the pitcher and the towel and Torch 2 will hold the basin. If incense is used, the hand washing will happen after the Father incenses the altar (and, if a deacon is present, after the deacon incenses the priest).

Instructions for the Lead Servers: Lead Server 1 will receive the gifts with Father in front of the Altar. He will bring the gifts to the altar and place them there. Then he will hold the thurible and the boat, standing in front of his kneeler, and wait for Father to be ready for the incense. He will hand Father the boat, open the thurible, and close the thurible when Father has placed the incense in the thurible. He will then receive the boat from Father and give him the thurible. He then places the boat in its place on the stand and waits for the deacon to finish incensing the people. He then receives the thurible from the deacon, hangs it on the stand, and returns to his seat. (Since this is the last time that incense is used, there is no need to place a new charcoal in the thurible.)

Lead server 2 will light the candles during the prayer for protection against storms. Then he will lead the offertory procession *immediately* after the general intercessions. When he returns from the offertory procession, he will be the main assistant for the deacon in preparing the altar. These are things to make sure are on the altar: All six cups; two ciboria filled with bread; the purificators. Be ready to give to and receive from Deacon the water to mix with the wine. After the priests hands are washed, Lead Server 2 returns to his seat.

Eucharistic Prayer:

After the “Holy-Holy-Holy,” the Eucharistic Prayer begins. The altar servers kneel at their places. The **crucifer** is responsible for ringing the bells during the Eucharistic Prayer. There are three times when the bells are rung: 1) as Father places his hands over the gifts and asks God to send the Holy Spirit. During this time, Father does not stop talking. The bells are rung while he is talking with his hands over the gifts. 2) While Father holds up the host and says “Do this in memory of me.” 3) While he holds up the cup and says “Do this in memory of me.” *Pay close attention.* There are several different versions of the Eucharistic Prayer. The crucifer needs to make sure he gets it right.

At the end of the Eucharistic prayer, is the Great Amen. The servers should all sing along with the congregation. During the Our Father, the servers say the Our Father with hands folded individually. **Do not** hold hands when saying the Our Father in the Sanctuary. During the sign of peace, exchange the sign of peace with those that are with you. **Do not** cross the Sanctuary to exchange the sign of peace with the servers on the other side.

Reception of Holy Communion:

Servers stand with the congregation during the “Lamb of God” and kneel with the congregation afterward for the “Lord, I am not worthy...” After Father has received Holy Communion, the servers on the choir side move to the baptistery side, bowing

together as they go. All servers stand in line with the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to receive the Host from the priest. The altar servers will not receive from the cup when they are serving.

When the ministers of communion begin to move to their stations, the servers return to their kneelers and kneel until the purification of the vessels has been completed. Also after Communion, Lead Server 2 and the torchbearers should be alert to the need to assist in the clearing of the altar.

OR

Altar servers will assist in the distribution of Holy Communion by using the communion patens. Immediately after receiving Holy Communion from the priest, go to the credence table to get the patens. The four servers with patens will then proceed around the ambo, down the ramp, and each will go to his place, each to one of the 4 Host stations for Holy Communion. This happens before the Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion move into place; the servers will arrive at their communion stations **before** the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. While the minister is distributing Holy Communion, stand perpendicular to the minister. **Hold the paten with two hands in a place that ideally would be underneath the hands of those receiving Holy Communion.** You may need to adjust the placement based on the person receiving communion. After the distribution of Holy Communion, return the paten to the credence table and go back to your seat. Take care not allow any fragments of the Eucharist to fall from the paten while returning the paten to the credence table.

Blessing and Dismissal: Following Communion, Father will say: “Let us pray.” Everyone will stand.

Instructions for the Crucifer and torchbearers: The invitation “Let us pray” is the crucifer’s final cue to bring the Sacramentary to Father for the Prayer After Communion. After the prayer, the crucifer returns the Sacramentary to his chair and crosses over to the baptistery side of the sanctuary to retrieve the cross. At the words, “Mass has ended, go in peace,” the crucifer, along with the torchbearers, line up in the main aisle. All face the altar.

Instructions for the Lead Servers: Lead Server 2 will light the torches during the announcements. After the words, “Mass has ended, go in peace,” the lead servers will line up three rows behind the crucifer and torchbearers, all facing the altar. When Father genuflects, the lead servers genuflect. When Father turns, all turn and the lead servers lead the procession out with the same dignity that they processed in.

After Mass: Once in the back, return to the front, using the side aisle (not the main aisle or ambulatories). Still wearing their albs or cassocks/surplices, the servers should re-hang the torches and cross and extinguish the candles.

The lead servers then lead the general servers in a prayer of thanksgiving in the front row and supervise them in hanging up their albs. Lead servers should *ALWAYS* hang up their cassocks and surplices.

Thank you for volunteering to assist in the celebration of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. May God Bless you abundantly.