

St. Augustine Church
Liturgical Ministry Formation
2008 Guide for Altar Servers



I. INTRODUCTION

The responsibility for ensuring that the flow of our Liturgical celebration is proper and according to the Roman Rite is the responsibility of all who are in attendance. Of particular note are those that support the ordained (priest and/or deacon) during the execution of the Liturgy, the Altar Servers.

As a highly visible participant of the Liturgy, it is of the utmost importance that those individuals serving in this ministry understand their role during Mass, as well as their role during the setup of Mass and the clean up after Mass.

This guide is provided to you as a means of referencing the key responsibilities of Altar Servers. Specifically, this guide outlines what the setup for Mass involves, overviews the execution of the Mass, and concludes with the cleanup of the Altar after Mass.

I. Arriving Early to Mass

Each Altar Server must arrive thirty (30) minutes prior to the scheduled time for Mass.

Note: If you are scheduled for a Mass and are unable to attend or otherwise serve, it is your responsibility to find a replacement and notify the scheduled Mass Coordinator.

- Upon entering the church, you should go to the Holy Water bless yourself and make a profound bow to the altar.

Note: Once you make this profound bow, you will **not** need to repeat this act of reverence to the altar again during mass.

Note: The use of the Holy Water is to assist you in recalling your baptism.

- Check in with the designated Mass Coordinator in the Sacristy.
- Hang up coats, if necessary.
- Put on clean robes, ropes (according to liturgical season).
 1. Ordinary Time requires green cinctures (ropes)
 2. Advent and Lent requires purple cinctures.
 3. Easter and Christmas are Gold or White cinctures. (You must check with the presider or deacon to know which color.)

4. Pentecost requires red cinctures.

Note: The cinctures will either be already in the closet on robes or in the bottom left drawer of the cabinet next to the refrigerator.

II. Setting up the Altar

- Get Worship Aid, Hymnal, and find Opening Hymn and place on seats on the Altar.
- Put Sacramentary on Credence table.
- For Holy Days, Easter Time, or Baptisms, light the Paschal Candle 10 minutes before Mass begins.
- Assist the MC with the remaining setup of the Credence table prior to Mass. This includes:
 5. Bring the 8 cups and purificators up.
 6. Bring the 4 patens up.
 7. Bring the Chalice up with a pall.
 8. Bring 2 cruets of water up with dish and drying purificator.
 9. Optional and at the presider's or deacon's discretion, an empty Ciborium is also placed on the Credence table.



10. It is imperative that the Altar have the large corporal opened and flat upon the Altar.

Note: The large corporal is a white rectangular linen cloth. When opened, it lays flat in the exact middle of the Altar.

A special note about this large corporal: Its purpose is to capture any consecrated material for its proper handling. Occasionally, the Altar Servers are asked after the Eucharist during Triduum to

remove the large corporal. There is an appropriate way to fold the corporal.

- 1) Take the outside right corners and fold them to the middle of the corporal.
- 2) Take the outside left corners and fold them to the middle of the corporal.
- 3) Take the bottom of the corporal and fold it to the middle of the corporal.
- 4) Take the top of the corporal and fold it to the middle of the corporal.
- 5) Lastly, fold the bottom edge of the corporal to the top of the corporal and the right edge to the left edge.

The corporal is returned to the credence table.

11. Following the setup of Credence table, the Ambo candle should be lit.

Note: The purpose of the Ambo candle is to reflect the presence of God through the Liturgy of the Word.



Following the conclusion of the Liturgy of Word (after the Prayers of the Faithful), the Ambo candle should be extinguished. While the Lector is trained to extinguish the Ambo Candle, they may forget. To this end, prior to setting the Altar, Altar Server C should ensure that the candle is out.

12. Altar Servers A & B light the candles below our Virgin Mother Mary and St. Joseph.
13. Altar Server C prepares the Candles 2 minutes before Mass begins for the procession. (The 2 processional candles are only to be lit in the sacristy.)

14. Line up in the aisle 1 minute before Mass begins (Cross bearer followed by the two candle bearers.)

Note: When there are only 2 Altar Servers, the Cross is to be placed in its holder 5 minutes before Mass. The procession will consist of only 2 Altar Servers.

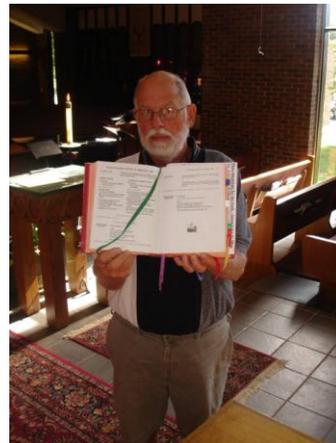
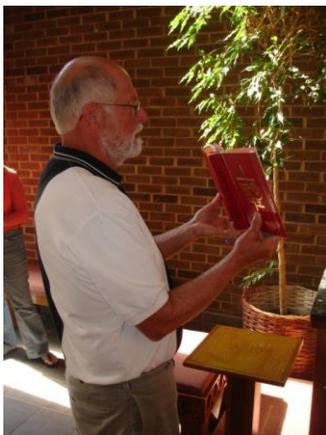
Note: In the extreme case of only 1 Altar Server, the two candles are placed on the Altar lit. The procession will only consist of 1 Altar Server carrying the Cross.

III. Altar Server Support of the Introductory Rite

During the Introductory Rite, there are several activities that involve the Altar Server, aside from responding to the prayers and requests of the Presider or Deacon. The first is to bring the Sacramentary to the Presider, leading the Sprinkling Rite, and facilitating the dismissal of the children for Children's Liturgy.

III.A The Sacramentary

- The first time the Sacramentary is required is for the Penitential Rite. This may not be necessary if the Deacon is present or the presider does not call for the Sacramentary. This requires that Altar Server on the end closest to the Presider, obtain the book from the Credence Table and walk over to the Presider. The posture for presenting the Sacramentary is illustrated below.



As illustrated, the Altar Server is not directly in front of the Presider but rather off to the right.

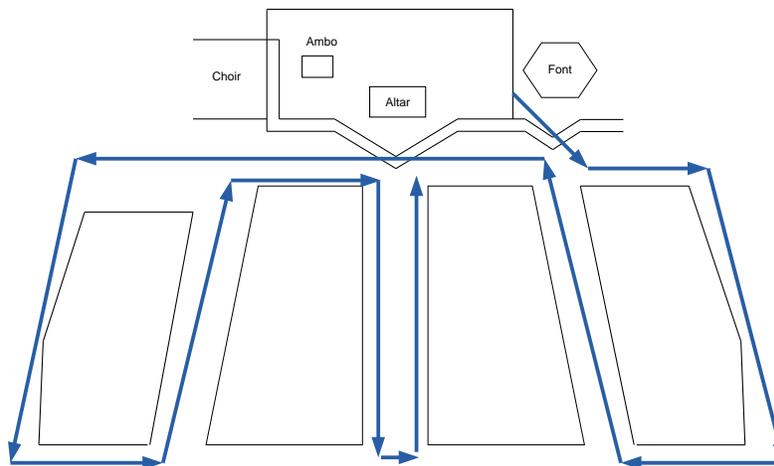
- The second and always required time is during the Collect, the last prayer after the Glory to God.

Note: The challenge here is that the Glory to God is optional and may not be recited or sung

III.B The Sprinkling Rite

As mentioned earlier, the Glory to God is optional. However, on Baptism Sundays when the Baptisms are at a different Mass, then the Presider or Deacon performs the Sprinkling Rite. For this and all Sprinkling Rites, the following steps are taken.

1. The Cross Bearer and the Altar Server closest to the window on the bench, proceed to the Font to join either the Presider or Deacon.
2. The Cross Bearer takes up the Cross and the other Altar Server is handed the bowl full of Holy Water.
3. Then, with the music of the Glory to God, the Cross Bearer leads the ordained minister around the nave of the church. The map



below outlines the path of the Cross for the Sprinkling Rite.

Note: When Baptisms are performed at your Mass, this Sprinkling Rite and singing of the Glory to God is moved to after all of the Baptisms.

Note: It is very important for all Altar Servers to focus and pay particular attention to the Presider or Deacon to ensure smooth transitions from one part of the Mass to another part of the Mass.

III.C Dismissal of the Children

For all Sunday Masses, except those with a Baptism, Children's Liturgy is expected to happen. After the Collect, the Presider or Deacon will call all children ages four (4) to the fourth (4th) grade to come forward. At this point, the Cross Bearer goes to takes up the Cross and stands behinds the Presider or Deacon.

Following the presider or deacon's discussion with the children, he will take the Cross and hand it to one of the children. The Altar Server can then return to their seat.

Note: It the event that there were no Cross Bearer as there are only 2 Altar Servers, the Altar Server closest to the window, will perform this duty.

Note: During the Presentation of the Gifts, the children and Cross return to the sanctuary and process down with the gifts. The Altar Server responsible for bring the Cross to the children for dismissal, is responsible for taking the Cross back to its stand once returned.

IV. Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist commences following the Prayers of the Faithful. This section of the guide outlines all of the activities required of the Altar Servers.

IV.A. Setting the Table

- The first activity is to ensure that the Ambo Candle is extinguished.
- The second activity is to set the table as illustrated below.



1. Altar Servers B & C bring 4 cups each to the Altar.
At the same time Altar Server A brings the book stand and Sacramentary to the Altar.
2. Altar Servers B & C bring the 4 purificators each to the Altar and place them to the right of each cup.
At the same time, Altar Server A brings the Chalice, pall, and purificator to the Altar.
3. Altar Server C returns to the bench.
4. Altar Servers A & B process to the vestibule to lead the gifts to Altar.

Note: It the event that there not 3 Altar Servers, #3 above is omitted and both Altar Servers proceed to the vestibule.

IV.B. Presentation of Gifts

- When the Presider or Deacon stands to go down to receive the gifts, Altar Server C stands. Once the Presider or Deacon is past the Altar, then Altar Server C proceeds to join him on his right.

Note: That when there are no more than 2 Altar Servers, this will not happen.

- Once both the Presider or Deacon and Altar Server are at the bottom of the Altar, the Altar Servers in the vestibule commence the procession of the gifts.
- Upon arriving at the Presider or Deacon, the two Altar Servers in the procession take up positions on either side, one to the left of the Presider/Deacon and one to the right of the Altar Server C.

Note: The Altar Server A should be standing next to the other Altar Server and not next to the Deacon. On the other hand, if there is no Children's Liturgy, then this Altar Server returns to their seat and remains standing.

- The Presider/Deacon will receive the gifts from the processors. He will then take the bread and hand it to an Altar Server directly beside him.
- The Presider/Deacon will receive the gifts from the processors. He will then take the wine and hand it to an Altar Server directly beside him.
- Lastly, the Presider/Deacon will welcome back the children. The remaining Altar Server will take the Cross and return it to its stand.

IV.C. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Again, in addition to participating/responding to the petitions and prayers of the Presider, there are many activities requiring your attention during this portion of the Mass. These begin with the Mixing of the Water and Wine through to the receiving of Communion.

Note: During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Altar Servers are not to sit at any time unless the season calls for kneeling. Please check with the Presider or Deacon for special instructions during Holy Seasons.

IV.C.1 Preparation of the Gifts

Mixing of Water and Wine

This is the initial act beginning the actual consecration. The mixing of water and wine is meant to extol the divinity of Jesus when He was pierced in the side when crucified. To this end, Altar Server A will bring

the cruet of water to the Deacon or Presider for inclusion in the picture of wine.

Altar Server A retrieves the cruet of water from either the Presider or Deacon. Altar Server A remains standing facing the font but clearly off to the side of the Altar.

Incensation of the Gifts

During major feast days, the Presider will incense the Altar with the gifts as a prayer to God. To this end, an Altar Server C may be required to go and pick up the incensor/thurible and deliver it to the Presider.

Note: This is optional and will depend upon the Presider and the season of the Liturgical Year. Thus it is imperative for the Altar Servers to check with the Presider or Deacon prior to Mass.

Washing of Hands

Prior to the actual consecration, the Presider will perform a somewhat private ritual washing of the hands. Aside from the ascetics of washed hands, the ritual asks God to cleanse him (the presider) for all of his inequities. This is done just prior to prayer over the gifts.

Altar Server B picks up the water vessel and purificator from the Credence table once Altar Server A steps back and to the side of the Altar. Altar Server B then proceeds to stand directly to the left of Altar Server A.

Note: When there is to be an incensation, Altar Server B will wait until the Presider begins to hand the Incensor back to the either the Deacon or Altar Server C.

In the event that there are not three Altar Servers and there is to be an incensation, follow the procedure outlined below.

Altar Server A supports the Washing of the Hands outlined below.

- Altar Server A returns to the Credence table following the mixing of Water and Wine and removes the top to the cruet and places the cruet back on the Credence table.
- Altar Server A then drapes the purificator their left forearm.
- Then Altar Server A picks up the water vessel in the left hand.
- Altar Server A then retrieves the cruet of water (now with no top) in the right hand proceeds back to the Presider.
- Altar Server B supports the incensation described above.

Once completed all Altar Servers return to their bench and remain standing.

IV.C.2 The Eucharistic Prayer

During this part of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is when the Presider and all the assembly ask God to send His Holy Spirit to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is also known as the transubstantiation.

Epiclesis

After the Holy, Holy, Holy is the actual invocation of the Holy Spirit onto the Bread and Wine to change it to the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Epiclesis. There are two times when the Presider steps slightly back and genuflects to the Altar.

Each time the Presider genuflects, each Altar Server is required to perform a profound bow towards the Altar.

Note: A profound bow is a bow at the waist. You are not to remain down but return upright with a comparable speed to that of the Presider.

Note: Also you will notice that the choir/cantor is performing the same profound bow.

Great Amen

The Final Doxology is the hymn of praise to the great and wonderful gift of the Eucharist. For this hymn the Altar Servers are to join the Presider and Deacon at the Altar.

Note: Altar Server C stands to the far left closest to the font, regardless of the presence of the Deacon.

Note: Altar Servers A & B stand to the right of the Presider. You may also notice that if the choir is present, they will join you.

IV.C.3 The Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

Following the Presider's instruction to either join hands or stand in the traditional posture of the penitent (orans – hands held up with the palms facing the sky). Do what they instruct.

Again, following another Presider instruction, either sing, chant or recite the Lord's Prayer (the Our Father).

Sign of Peace

Do as the assembly and offer one another a sign of peace. Recall that those closest to the Presider and/or Deacon should offer him peace.

Note: Altar Servers should not leave the Altar to offer signs of peace to those in the assembly.

Conclude Setting the Table

After the sign of peace, the remaining patens must be placed on the Altar. To this end, any of the Altar Servers can place the patens on the Altar, however, it is the responsibility of Altar Server A to place the remaining patens on the Altar.

Lamb of God

The Lamb of God is a litany hymn/prayer reminding us of the strength of Christ. At this point, the Presider is preparing the patens with the Body of Christ. All Altar Servers are to line up parallel to the Altar in front of the Presider's chair behind the Presider himself.

Note: When presented the Body of Christ, the response is a clear and strong Amen. As you say Amen, bow your head to venerate the Body of Christ.

Note: When presented the Blood of Christ, the response is a clear and strong Amen. As you say Amen, bow your head to venerate the Blood of Christ.

After receiving Communion, return to your bench and sit. Remember to sing the Communion hymns.

Clearing the Sacramentary

Once all the Eucharistic Ministers have retrieved their vessels of body or blood (paten or cup), the Sacramentary and its stand must be removed from the Altar. To this end, the Altar Server closest to the window, will go and retrieve the Sacramentary and stand and return the stand to the windowsill and the Sacramentary to the end of Credence table.

Purification of Vessels

As the distribution of the Eucharist nears its end, Eucharistic Ministers will begin to bring the cups and purificators back to the Credence table. While remaining seated, the purificators will be handed to one of you. Fold the purificators back to their original shape.

Once all purificators are folded, the Altar Server seated in the middle (when there are 3 Altar Servers) or the one seated closest to the Presider's chair (when there are only 1 or 2 Altar Servers) collects all purificators and places them on the Credence table prior to the arrival of the Presider or Deacon who will conclude the purification rite.

V. Concluding Rite

The end of the Liturgy is marked with the charge to go forth and be that which we consumed. In other words, to be Christ to all those we meet. For Altar Servers this marks their final public activity, that of the Closing Procession.

When the final hymn begins, each of the Altar Servers move to the object they carried in during the entrance procession.

- Altar Server A proceeds to the Cross where they will pull the Cross out of the stand and rest it on the floor.
- Altar Server B proceeds to the Candle next to the Altar but closest to the Ambo where they will pull the candle out of the stand and rest it on the floor.
- Altar Server C proceeds to the Candle next to the Altar but closet to the Font where they will pull the candle out of the stand and rest it on the floor.

Note: As you stand, make sure that the Cross or the Candles is not leaning in any direction.

Note: Do not spin the candles or the Cross while you wait.

While Altar Server B & C stand facing each other, Altar Server B will keep an eye on Altar Server A. Altar Server A faces the Presider.

At the indication of the Presider, Altar Server A proceeds to depart the Altar, Once Altar Server A begins to depart, Altar Server B & C pick up the candles and proceed down the steps behind the Cross.

Note: The Presider will venerate the Altar once more before departing. Therefore, Altar Server A will pause briefly (a count of 15) at the first pew. After which, continue the procession to the vestibule.

VI. After Mass

The last set of responsibilities for all Altar Servers is to clean up the Altar Area. This entails collecting all cups, purificators, patens, cruet(s), chalice, pall, Sacramentary, and water vessel and returning them to the Sacristy

Take off cincture and robes and return to hangers.

Note: At **NO** time is it acceptable for the Altar Servers to clean off the Credence table while the closing hymn is being sung.

VI. ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- ✓ You are in front of the assembly. Even though you may believe that you are hidden, a large portion of the assembly can see you. To this end:
 - Keep your movements to a minimum.
 - Participate in all of the prayers, note the responses and prayers are in the green Gather book beginning at number 153.
 - Participate in the Creed, note the Creed can be found in number 161 in the green Gather book.
 - Above all sing.

- Lastly, while Jesus was often moved to pity, it was only at the death of those closest to him did He cry. However, He was not depressed. We are all asked through the Liturgy to be Eucharist or Christ to others. This begins at Mass. Smile and look like you want to be there.
- ✓ Often times, there are minor changes to the preceding instructions for special occasions. Therefore, it is imperative to check in with the MC or Deacon/Presider before Mass and to pay very close attention to the Deacon/Presider.
- ✓ Even though there are many specific tasks called out by Altar Server, the proper execution of the Roman Rite from an Altar Server perspective belongs to all of the Altar Servers. To this end, if you notice something needs to be done, then by all means do it according to this guide.
- ✓ It is recommended that the following prayer be recited prior to taking part in the Liturgy.

“Prayer of Preparation for Altar Server”

Oh *Jesus*, my King and Lord, by the grace of the heavenly Father and the power of the Holy Spirit, guide me in all righteousness as I serve You today at the Altar so I may be always worthy of Your presence. If I happen to make an error, may it be a lesson so my service will be perfect tomorrow.
Jesus, I love you with all my heart.

Amen.



St. John Berchmans
Patron Saint of Altar Servers

Note: If you have any questions or need assistance, please call Eric Broughton or the MC for their Mass.)