

ST. MARY'S VISITATION

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

PREPARATION

- Please arrive no later than 15 minutes before the liturgy.
- Be clean.
- Put on an alb that fits properly (ankle length), cincture, and cross.
- Place cup(s) with purificators and water cruet on credence table (water for cruet comes from the jug of water in refrigerator, not from the faucet).
- **Make sure bread and wine are placed on gift table.**
- Light altar candles with extinguisher. After lighting the candles, make sure the wick of the extinguisher is pushed back out. (Sometimes Fr. Dan likes to leave candles lit between Sunday morning Masses.)
- Be sure the microphone system and lights are on in church.

INTRODUCTORY RITE

[left side = ambo; right side = cantor side]

A. Procession with processional cross:

- Server with processional cross leads procession; when processing into church the corpus of the cross should face the cross bearer. The other server walks behind the cross bearer. Lector follows, then Father.
- Server with cross walks down aisle, stops at the base of the sanctuary steps, moves to the left, and waits for other Liturgical Ministers.
- Other server follows the cross bearer and at the base of the sanctuary steps moves to the right side.
- Wait for Father; bow, then move to chairs. Cross bearer does NOT bow but remains in erect posture as others bow, then proceeds to place cross in stand, and moves to chair.

- **During the end of the Gloria (“in the glory of God the Father, Amen.”), one server brings the sacramentary to the priest. When there is no Gloria: after Father has kissed the altar and arrived at his chair, bring the sacramentary and stand at his right.**
- Hold book for opening prayer; after the prayer, when people start to sit down, return with the book and be seated for the readings.
(Note: Do not close book or move until people have said “Amen” to the prayer.)

B. Procession with processional cross and two candles (total of three servers):

- Server with processional cross leads procession. Two candle bearers walk on either side of cross bearer.
- At base of altar steps, cross bearer and the candle bearer on the left move over to the left. Candle bearer on the right moves to the right side of Father. After Father bows, candle bearers place candles where directed. (Continue as above, letter A)

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- After the Prayer of the Faithful, when the people are seated, **SERVICES MOVE IMMEDIATELY** - one server puts the chalice and the water cruet (without the cap) on the altar (right of center) and the other server puts the sacramentary on the altar (left of center). **If there are any plates of hosts on credence table, bring them to the altar at this time.** If these plates are empty, bring them up with the cups after the sign of peace. On weekends if there is time, return to chairs, be seated, and wait for Father to stand and step down to receive the gifts.

- When Father goes down to receive the gifts, both servers go with him and stand on either side ready to assist.
- **Father may have one or both servers assist in placing bread and wine on the altar. Then, both servers immediately bring the dish and towel from the credence table to the priest at the altar. Father first will pour some water into the chalice of wine and shortly after that will wash his hands.**
- When Father is finished washing his hands, return articles (on weekends this includes the empty wine cruet) to credence table and move to chairs. **REMAIN STANDING FOR THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER** – just as cantor does.
- **For daily mass, after the Prayer of the Faithful, one server accompanies Father to receive the gifts. Meanwhile, the other server puts the sacramentary and chalice on the altar. Then, both servers bring the water cruet, dish and towel to the priest at altar as above. If you serve alone, hang the towel over your left arm.**
- **After offering the Sign of Peace to the priest and to one another, the servers bring the tray of cups and purificators from the credence table and place them on the right side of the altar. If there are empty plates to be brought to the altar, these are placed left of center. Both servers stand next to Eucharistic Ministers and wait to receive the Eucharist.**
- After Father receives Communion, he will minister the Eucharistic Bread to you. A Eucharistic minister will offer you the Blood of Christ. If you do not wish to drink from the cup, return to your seat.

- After receiving communion, and after the Eucharistic ministers have moved down to minister the Eucharist to the assembly, clear the altar. **(If the ciborium from the tabernacle is on the altar, leave it there.)** One server can take the altar missal back to the stool, and the other server puts the wine carafe and the chalice on the credence table.
- Go to your seats and sit down; do not cross legs or fidget; join in singing the communion hymn.
- After communion, the servers get the empty bread plates from the minister at the tabernacle and place them on the credence table.
- After communion, when Father says “Let us Pray...” one server brings the sacramentary to Father. After the prayer, return the sacramentary to the stool. **(On Sundays, Fr. Charlie usually does not need the sacramentary for this prayer.)**

RECESSIONAL

After the closing hymn is announced and when Father begins to move to the base of the sanctuary steps:

- If processional cross has been carried in the entrance procession, the cross bearer should pick up the cross and go to the base of the sanctuary steps and wait for Father. During the recessional, the corpus of the cross should be turned away from the cross bearer. The other server just goes directly to front of altar. (If candles are carried in procession, candle bearers get their candles when cross bearer gets the cross).
- During closing hymn, watch Father to know when to bow, if you are NOT holding cross or candles, then bow with Father; turn and lead procession out (when cross is used, the cross bearer leads out first).

AFTER MASS

- Gently put out candles using the extinguisher. (Please be careful not to press the candlewick down into the candle wax.)
- Put chalice and empty vessels on counter in sacristy. (An adult Eucharistic minister may do this).
- Clean and dry the lavabo dish with paper towels and return it to the credence table.
- Do not dump out cruet of water—return it to the refrigerator.
- PLEASE HANG UP ALBS NEATLY!!

REMINDERS!!!!

- **As you serve, be reverent, alert, and ready for what comes next. Please participate in the sung and spoken prayers.**
- **If you are unable to attend your scheduled weekend mass, you are responsible for finding a substitute. Two unexcused absences will mean the removal of name from the server list for the remainder of the year.**
- **Shoes (regular or athletic style), not flip-flops, are the appropriate footwear when wearing an alb.**
- **Always remember to sign in.**

YOUR SERVICE IS VERY IMPORTANT AND GREATLY APPRECIATED!!

If you have any questions, please contact Jenny Dascoli in the Liturgy and Music Office at 262-782-4485 or email jdascoli@stmaryeg.org.

TERMINOLOGY FOR SERVERS



Alb: A white robe worn by servers, priests, and deacons during mass.

Ambo: The stand used to proclaim the readings, gospel and homily.

Altar: The holy table on which the bread and wine are offered.

Altar Screen: The gold screen located between the altar and the tabernacle.*

Baptismal Font: The large basin of water in the front of the Church (near the Mary Shrine) used to administer the sacrament of Baptism.

Baptistry: The area in the front of the Church where the Baptismal Font is located.

Candle Bearers: Those servers who carry candles in procession to the altar.



Censor: A container holding incense* that is swung from a chain (used for funerals and special liturgies, i. e., at Christmas, during Holy Week, and the Easter season.).



Chalice: The cup used by the priest to consecrate the wine during Mass.



Chasuble: The outer garment worn by the priest, over his stole and alb;* there are a variety of colors to fit the various seasons and feasts of the Church.



Ciborium: The vessels used for distributing Holy Communion and for storing consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle.*

Cincture: The cord that you tie around the waist when wearing an alb.

Credence Table: The table in the corner of the sanctuary on which the chalice,* paten, * the water (and wine at weekday Masses), towels and sometimes hosts are kept.

Crucifer: The server who carries the processional cross* during Mass.



Cruets: The small vessels that hold the water and, at weekday Masses, the wine.

Easter Candle: A large candle normally kept in the Baptistry, but also used at funerals and throughout the Easter Season. The Easter Candle is lit for Sunday Mass during the Easter Season (Easter Sunday through Pentecost) and when there are Baptisms or Funerals.

Gift Table: Located in the center aisle of the Church, this table holds the bread and wine which is brought up from the congregation during the Preparation of the Altar and Gifts.*

Gospel Book: A book containing Gospel readings that the deacon carries in procession; the book is also used on special occasions and always carried in procession.

Holy Oils: The three types of blessed oil (used for baptisms, confirmation, and the anointing of the sick) stored in a glass case in the Baptistry.

Incense: A mixture of aromatic (fragrant) spices burned in the censor; the rising smoke symbolizes our prayers rising up to God as a “fragrant offering” (Psalm 141).

Incense Boat: A small container of incense with a spoon for scooping; it is held in the left hand by the *thurifer** while he or she swings the censor with the right hand.

Lavabo Dish: A glass dish that collects the water poured by the server when the priest washes his hands during the *Lavabo* – the ritual of hand washing during the Preparation of the Gifts.

Lectionary: A book of Scripture readings used at Mass and placed on the *Ambo*.*

Preparation of Altar and Gifts: The time at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist when the gifts are brought to the altar.

Paschal Candle: See *Easter Candle* above.



Paten: A flat dish used by the priest on which a host or hosts are placed.



Processional Cross: A cross on a pole which is carried in procession by a server at special liturgies – feasts, funerals, some weddings – and which he/she places in a stand in the sanctuary.*



Purificator: The cloth napkins used to wipe the chalice and other cups for the communion.

Sacramentary: The book of prayers for the Mass used by the priest for the opening prayer, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the closing prayer. A server holds the book for the opening and closing prayers and places it on the altar at the offertory.

Sanctuary: The area of the Church where the altar and ambo are located; the servers are located in the sanctuary throughout Mass.

Tabernacle: The sacred container located behind the altar screen used for keeping consecrated hosts in reservation.

Thurifer: The server who swings the incense in procession and takes care of it during Mass.

These terms and the items they represent should be known and memorized by all servers. Please ask the priest if you are unsure of the location of an item or the meaning of a term. Servers will be gradually trained with the incense, processional cross, and candles in the future.