

**Altar Servers Training Program  
St. Francis Parish,  
264 S. Grant St., Ellsworth, WI 54011.**

Serving at the altar is a great honor and a great privilege in the Catholic Church. Servers at the altar play an important role in the celebration of the Holy Mass. It is a special ministry in the church and when we serve God in church, we learn how to serve God outside of church, by helping people who are in need, by taking care of each other and the earth that we live on, by loving people that no one else loves. That's how we really serve God. I once heard a comment by a priest "altar serving is an excellent way for kids to publicly demonstrate their faith in the Lord while serving him".

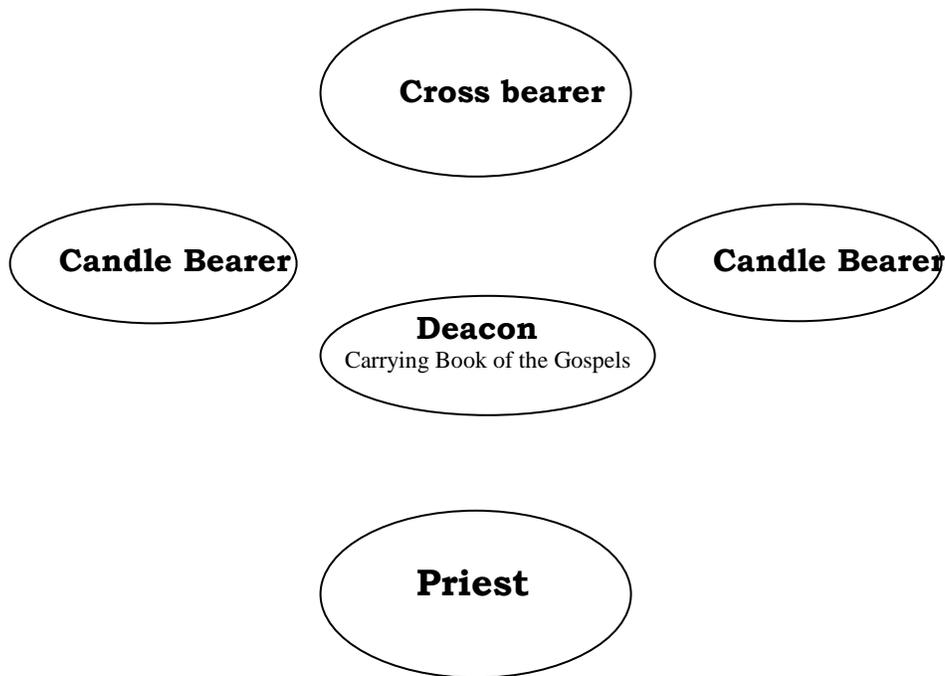
**General Information for the Servers:**

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass.
2. Hair should be combed, as well as having clean hands. *Please refrain from wearing flip-flops.* Remember, we are in God's house and we should dress and act accordingly.
3. Put on your alb neatly. After Mass, make sure you hang up your alb neatly.
4. Walk in a proper manner with hands folded in front of you. Never have your hands in your pockets. When you are standing or walking, keep your hands folded in front of your chest when not holding anything. Keep your hands on your lap when sitting. Do not fidget.
5. Always pay attention. Anticipate the needs of the priest and do not keep him waiting due to lack of attention.
6. If for some reason you are unable to serve when scheduled, it is your responsibility to find a replacement (that is substituting some one in your place to serve at the altar).
7. Always remember: Serving Mass is a privilege.
8. When it doubt, look to the priest or the deacon for guidance.
9. CHECK CREDENCE TABLE: Sacramentary book, chalice, bowl, purificator, hand towel, pitcher of water (Here in our Parish, it is done by the priest or deacon).

**PREPARATIONS BEFORE MASS:**

ARRIVE 15 minutes before Mass. We need **three servers** for the weekends Masses. **Cross bearer and two candle bearers.** PUT ON ALB and cincture and light the altar candles. When rosary is over, get the candles and cross and walk down the side aisle to meet the priest. The ushers will help light the processional candles before Mass starts.

## ORDER OF PROCESSION FROM THE ENTRANCE OF THE CHURCH



When you are ready at the entrance of the church for the procession, look for the lector to read the introduction of the Mass. As singing begins, process in slowly to the sanctuary. It is highly recommended "**Don't walk fast, walk reverently and slowly**".

As soon as you reach the sanctuary, the cross bearer goes on the left side and one of the candle bearers goes on the left. The other candle bearer goes on the right. In the center, the priest and deacon come and bow together with the priest and deacon in front of the altar. Wait until the priest and the deacon move behind the altar. Then walk to your right to place the cross and processional candles in their holders. Walk behind the tabernacle and stand by the credence table with folded hands.

(After the greeting, when the deacon is there, he will lead the penitential rite. If he needs the sacramentary, bring the book to him. )

### OPENING PRAYER:

Hold prayer book after the penitential rite (and usually the Gloria). Hold the prayer book for the priest so he can read the Opening Prayer. Place the book on your palms with your thumbs holding it at a convenient height. After the prayer, set the book down on the credence table and return to your seat.

**LITURGY OF THE WORD** (Normally, no duties) Servers listen with attention during the Scripture readings and respond with the assembly during the psalm.

### GOSPEL PROCESSIONS

After the second reading, the servers stand at the Gospel Acclamation. Candle Bearers quickly cross behind the tabernacle to get their lighted candle and come to the altar standing on either side of the priest. After the priest or deacon picks up the Gospel book from the front of the altar, the two Candle Bearers lead him to the lectern. Candle Bearers stand one on each side of lectern during the reading (one stands on left and other stands on right). When the priest or deacon is finished, walk together to return the candles to their stands, bowing in front of the tabernacle and return to your seats walking behind the tabernacle.

**HOMILY:**

Sit.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH:**

Stand with hands folded.

**PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL:**

After the recitation of the Creed, the Cross Bearer brings the intercessory file (blue binder on the credence table) to where the priest is standing to begin the prayer of the faithful. The other servers stand with hands folded.

**PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR:**

When the prayer of the faithful is finished, the priest or deacon will step down to prepare the altar. The server brings the items from the credence table and places them on the altar in this order.

- a. One Candle Bearer takes the Sacramentary to the altar and places it to the left of the corporal, on the altar.
- b. The Candle Bearer takes the *celebrant's chalice* and gives it to the deacon or priest. If the deacon or priest is not ready or not present, place the chalice at the center of the corporal. Always carry the chalice with one hand on top, holding the pall, and the other hand holding the stem of the chalice. Arrange the chalice if the deacon is not present.
- c. For Masses that offer both species (Body and Blood); please bring over all four chalices. Either hand them to the priest or deacon or line them up so that they will be easy to fill with the wine.
- d. While the collection is being collected, the Cross Bearer walks behind the tabernacle to get the cross, bows in front of the altar and walks back to the entrance of the church and will lead the Gift Bearers to the altar. As soon they reach the altar, bow and return the cross to its place. Return to your seat by walking behind the tabernacle. Stand by the credence table and wait until the bread and wine are brought to the altar.
- e. When the priest/deacon comes to the center to accept the gifts of bread and wine, the Candle Bearers after arranging the altar, come up with folded hands with the priest/deacon, in front of the altar and receive the gifts of bread and wine from the priest/deacon.
- f. When you receive the money basket, place it in front of the altar. If you receive either the water or wine, go to the right side of the altar and wait for the deacon or priest to take the items from you. Stand side by side with the other altar server. Hold the glass container with the handle away from you, so the priest or deacon can grasp it. Wait for him to give the empty containers back to you. When completed, bow together to the priest. Go to the credence table to prepare the water, bowl and towel for the washing of the hands. When the priest completes the offering of the gifts, the priest will then wash his hands. Bow together with the priest.

**WASHING OF THE HANDS:**

From the side table, servers take water, a bowl and a towel to the priest. When the priest has finished washing his hands, both servers should bow to the priest and return to the credence table. *Then the priest says the prayer and sings the 'The Lord be with you.... During that time, the servers stand with folded hands.* When the Holy, Holy, Holy is sung, all the servers come in front of the altar and kneel down for the Consecration.

**RINGING OF THE BELLS:**

The ringing of the bells is done to bring attention to the significance of the moment when the Body & Blood of Jesus is made manifest. The server rings the bell at three different points during the Eucharistic Prayer; 1) When the priest places both hands over the Chalice - **Ring once**. 2) At the

elevation of the Host – **Ring 3 times** and 3) At the elevation of the chalice containing the precious blood – **Ring 3 times**. At each elevation, the server rings the bell three times, stopping momentarily between each ring. After ringing the bells, the server places the bells back down on the carpet in order to keep them from continuing to ring.

**OUR FATHER/ SIGN OF PEACE:**

After the great Amen, which follows the Doxology (through him, with him, in him...), the servers stand in place (as they were just prior to kneeling) for the ‘Our Father’ and Servers will extend the sign of peace to each other, the priest, deacon and other ministers. After extending the sign of peace, the bell ringer should place the bell under the altar. One of the Candle Bearers will bring the communion dishes from the credence table to the altar. Then stand with folded hands to receive Communion. After receiving Communion, be seated at your seats.

**AFTER THE COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL:**

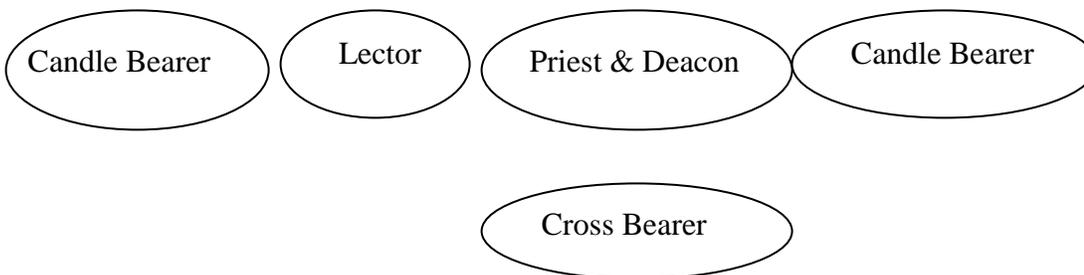
After the priest or deacon returns to the altar the other Candle Bearer should be ready with the water cruet and carry it to the altar for use in the purification of the Chalice. Bow after pouring the water. The priest or deacon will hand the sacramentary to a Candle Bearer to bring back to the cadence.

-----All the servers will be sitting for the Peace prayer and for the announcements.

**DISMISSAL AND RECESSION:**

When the priest says, “please stand for the final blessing,” one of the Candle Bearers will proceed directly in front of the priest with the sacramentary for the "Let us pray", and hold the book for the priest. When the priest finishes singing the “Let us pray”, close the sacramentary and return the sacramentary to the credence table. At this time, the Cross Bearer and the Candle Bears are to immediately walk behind the tabernacle and get the cross and processional candles. Once the priest or deacon says, "Go forth, the Mass is ended," and the people respond "Thanks be to God", the priest and deacon will walk to the altar and kiss the altar and ready to process out back to greet the people. The priest, deacon and lector will join the three servers in front of the altar in the following order:

**Line up at the altar**



All will bow together. The Cross Bearer starts to lead the processional with the Candle Bearers following next, followed by the Lector and then the Priest and Deacon in that order.

After the procession, the servers return the sanctuary, extinguish altar candles and put the items back in the sacristy. Carry the items reverently, using both hands. Make several trips if necessary. Again, do not rush

## Definitions and Terminology

**Alb:** A white linen vestment with close fitting sleeves, reaching nearly to the ground and secured round the waist by a cincture. Worn under the Chasuble by a priest. Worn by altar servers at Mass.

**Altar:** The table upon which Mass is celebrated.

**Ambo:** The platform, lectern or pulpit from which the reading and homily are given.

**Aspergillum** -The holy water sprinkler.

**Bowl** - The dish that catches the water when the priest washes his hands at Mass.

**Boat:** The vessel holding the unburned incense.

**Cassock:** a vestment opening, and buttoning down the front worn by clergy and servers. At Mass a surplice is worn over the cassock.

**Censer (Thurible):** container for burning incense that is hung from a chain.

**Chalice:** A cup of precious metal that holds the wine which becomes the Blood of Jesus after the consecration.

**Chasuble** – A sacred vestment worn by the priest, which covers the alb.

**Ciborium:** A large cup or container of precious metal with a cover of the same material which will hold the Body of Jesus after the consecration for distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful.

**Cincture** – A cord used to confine the loose, flowing alb, and prevent it from impeding the movements of the wearer. Its liturgical character appears from the prayers, which even from early times were recited when putting it on, and from the symbolism of spiritual watchfulness.

**Corporal:** A white linen cloth, usually with a cross in the center, used to protect any particles of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus from falling to the altar cloth. It is always folded and unfolded as to protect any particles from being lost. The corporal is like the body winding sheet used to hold the crucified body or Our Lord in the tomb.

**Credence Table:** The table in the sanctuary where the cruets, chalices and ciborium are kept before and after the Consecration.

**Cruet:** The small pitcher from which water or wine may be held and poured.

**Cope:** A cape-like vestment that is put on over the shoulders and hangs to the ankles, it is open at the front and clasped at the neck. The priest wears this at Benediction and in certain processions. Copes can be of any liturgical color.

**Decanter** -The large wine pitcher.

**Dalmatic:** The dalmatic is a loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves worn by the deacon. The color varies according to the liturgical feast or season of the liturgical year.

**Font-** The basin used for baptisms or for containing holy water.

**Finger Towel:** A folded rectangular cloth resembling a purificator, but much narrower, it is used by the priest to dry his fingers after they have been washed during the preparation of the gifts. It is kept with the water cruet and finger bowl.

**Genuflection:** An act of reverence, made either singly, by touching the right knee to the ground or doubly, by kneeling and bowing the head slightly. A single or simple genuflection is the proper act of reverence accorded Christ in the Blessed Sacrament within the tabernacle. A double or solemn genuflection is sometimes used before the Blessed Sacrament when it is exposed.

**Host/Altar Bread:** Unleavened bread, the consecrated species of bread, used in the Mass, becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Holy Water:** A Sacramental, holy water is water that has had salt added and then is blessed by a priest. This water in turn is used to bless people.

**Humeral Veil:** This is a long, narrow, shawl-like vestment used at Benediction and in processions when the Blessed Sacrament is carried.

**Lectionary:** The book of reading used for the liturgy of the word. It usually contains all the biblical reading used for the three year Sunday cycle of reading and the two-year daily Mass readings.

#### **Liturgical Colors:**

**Green:** For the season of Ordinary Time, as a symbol of hope and the growth and vitality of the life of faith.

**Purple/Violet:** For Advent and Lent, symbolic of penance and signifying the expectancy of the sovereignty of the Lord.

**Red:** For Passion (Palm) Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost; feasts of the Passion of Our Lord, and the Apostles and Evangelists, martyrs; symbolic of the supreme sacrifice of life for the love of God. (Blood shed in faith) Red is the color representing the Holy Spirit.

**Rose (Pink/Gaudette):** May be used on the Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday of Lent, as a symbol of anticipatory joy during a time of penance.

**White:** For the seasons of Christmas and Easter, feasts and commemorations of Our Lord (except those of the Passion), feasts and commemorations of the Blessed Virgin Mary, angels, and saints who are not martyrs. Also All Saints, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelists, the Chair of St. Peter, the Conversion of St. Paul. White, symbolic of purity and integrity of the life of faith. Gold is sometimes used in place of white or with white for Christmas and Easter.

**Black:** A traditional solemn color. Black or silver sometimes is used for morning color such as at funerals.

**Monstrance:** Vessel that holds the Blessed Sacrament during exposition for adoration and Benediction.

**Nave:** The middle portion of the church between the sanctuary and the entrance.

**Paten:** A small saucer shaped plate of precious metal that holds the Host. No layperson should touch the paten so be very careful when handling it in your official duties.

**Purificator:** A linen cloth used by the priest or deacon to dry the chalice after washing and purifying it. Used purificators must always be placed in the proper container for sacred cloths.

**Pall:** A square piece of cardboard or plastic, which is covered by linen and used to cover the chalice.

**Sacraments:** are outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification

**Sacramentals:** are those rites, actions and things which the Church uses in imitation of the Sacraments in order to obtain through the intercession of the Saints certain effects, particularly of spiritual nature. Sacramentals are the means of receiving actual grace to do good and avoid evil, of protection of soul and body, and the remission of venial sin. Among the sacramentals are prayers, holy water, blessings, the sign of the cross, salt, ashes, medals, the Rosary, candles, vestments, etc. What makes them very special is that they have the blessing of the priest.

**Sacramentary:** The book containing the prayers said by the priest during the Mass.

**Sacrarium:** A sink with it drain going directly into the ground usually fitted with a cover and lock which is used for the disposal of the following: The sacred linen wash and rinse water, used holy water, used baptismal water and blessed ashes.

**Sacristy:** The sacristy is the room and closets where the vestments and other items needed for Mass are kept and where the celebrant dresses for Mass.

**Sanctuary:** The part of the church containing the altar, tabernacle, and pulpit.

**Sanctuary Light:** The light (in the red glass) that always burns, as long as the Blessed Sacrament is in the Tabernacle.

**Stole:** A liturgical vestment composed of a strip of material from two to four inches wide and about eighty inches long. Only deacons, priests, and bishops wear the stole.

**Stoup:** The holy water fountains or bowels at the entrances of the church.

**Surplice:** A white large-sleeved tunic of half-length, made of linen or cotton, and worn by all the clergy and servers over a cassock.

**Tabernacle:** The safe box where the Blessed Sacrament is kept. The name means tent.

**Thurifer:** The minister who carries the censer or thurible.