

Altar Servers Resurrection Parish

Altar Servers work with the priest and others to make the liturgical celebration of the Mass as smooth and worship focused as possible. They do this by performing their duties with dignity, reflecting the true presence of Christ at the Mass.

Since the role of server is integral to the celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest at weekend Masses (Saturday Vigil and Sunday). On other important occasions, two or more servers may be assisting as requested by the priest. Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence.

Although institution into the ministry of acolyte is reserved to lay men, the diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. Such persons may carry out all the functions listed in no. 100 except for the distribution of Holy Communion and nos. 187 - 190 and no. 193 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)

Qualifications of an Altar Server at Resurrection Parish: We ask that candidates:

- have their family as registered members of Resurrection Parish
- have been Baptized, received First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion
- be regularly in attendance at both the weekend Mass and Religious Education programs as available for their age group.
- have a sincere desire to serve Jesus at the Mass
- know the parts of the Mass
- be able to serve at least one Mass each month.
- complete a training program and be installed by the pastor

Altar Server Mission: In summary the server's mission is:

- Know and participate in the Mass
- Be observant and adaptable
- Perform duties during the Mass in a dignified and respectful manner
- Serve as an example of dignified worship to the congregation
- By your actions, you are a real-life reminder of Jesus' presence with us at the Mass

To Altar Servers

To be Christ's page at the altar,
To serve Him freely there,
Where even angels falter,
Bowed low in reverent prayer.
To touch the throne most holy,
To hand the gifts for the feast.
To see Him meekly, lowly,
Descend at the word of the priest.
To hear man's poor petition,

To sound the silvery bell,
When he in sweet submission,
Comes down with us to dwell.
No grander mission surely
Could saints or men enjoy:
No heart should love more purely,
Than yours who serve with joy.
God bless you child forever,
And keep you in his care.
And guard you that you never
Belie the robes you wear.
For white bespeaks untainted
A heart both tried and true:
And red tells love the sainted
And holy martyrs knew.
Throughout your life, then, endeavor
God's graces to do right;
And be in heart forever
God's witness and God's knight.

Altar Servers: Mass Procedures at Resurrection Parish

- Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the Mass to confirm your availability to serve and to get ready to perform this service with reverence, love and dedication.
- Ask Father if there is anything else that you can help him to prepare for Mass.
- Place a missal by your seat in the sanctuary so that you may follow along with the Mass. You should sing, recited prayers and responses just as the rest of the congregation.
- Put on vestments. Vestments should be long enough to cover most of the clothing, but not so long as to be a tripping hazard. Shoes should be appropriate and not distracting.
- The servers light the altar candles at 5 minutes prior to the start of Mass.
- Wait quietly in the sacristy until it's time to go to the back of Church for the Procession. You should reflect on the coming awesome event-the Mass, in which you will soon be participating.
- Join the priest and other ministers in a prayer before leaving the sacristy if offered. If for some reason no prayer is offered, say a prayer of your choice to prepare for serving at Mass.
- If one server is present, they may carry the crucifix to lead the procession. If two servers are present to one may carrying the crucifix followed by the second as a "trailer" with hands folded at the chest. The priest may also request servers carry other items as needed or a candle.

- The processional members meet at the entrance of the church by the bell. Altar servers (cross bearer first) are first, followed by any ministers and then the priest.
- To begin Mass and the procession, a server will ring the bell at the signal from the priest.
- The procession moves up the center aisle. This is not a race. Move at a walking pace with grace and dignity in the procession. As members of the procession reach the foot of the sanctuary stairs, they stop, make a bow towards the altar and move up to stand by their seats. This continues until the Priest reverences the altar. The crucifix is placed in the stand in view of the congregation.
- If candles are used in the procession they are taken to the side table and extinguished. (Make sure to have matches to relight at the close of Mass at the table for the recessional)
- Servers remain standing in chairs that flank or are behind the priest.
- **Penitential Rite:** (Recite) I confess to almighty God.....
- **Kyrie:** (Recite) Lord have mercy...
- **Gloria:** (Recite) Glory to God in the highest....
- The priest will ask one of the servers to hold the Sacramentary (Book) when he reads the opening prayer. Have the book ready and bring the book to the priest when he says "Let us pray".
- Hold the book in your arms so the back of the book rests on your chest. The bottom of the book rests in your hands. The priest will close the book when he finishes the prayer. You may then set it down.
- All sit when the priest sits at the conclusion of the **Opening Prayer**.
- **Liturgy of the Word:** Be seated. (Listen) to the readings and responsorial.
- **Gospel Acclamation:** Stand, Sing the Alleluia and (recite) response to the priest before the reading of the Gospel.
- **Homily:** Be seated and listen to the homily.
- **Profession of Faith** (The Nicene Creed-Stand and recite). We believe in one God....
- **General Intercessions** (Prayers of the Faithful) Remain standing during the intercessions. Respond with "Lord hear our Prayer" as appropriate.
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist:** At the end of the intercessions, servers are to go to the credence table and bring any sacred vessels and hand them to the priest or deacon or adult minister who will

set the altar table. The priest will also require the Sacramentary book to be placed on the altar. If the priest or deacon is standing at the altar hand him the items. Never place items on the altar unless directed by the priest.

- As the ushers bring up the gifts in the offertory, the servers move to the foot of the altar with the priest. The priest receives the gifts and hands them to servers.
 - Servers do not bow to the ushers, only the priest
 - The collection is placed at the base of the altar.
 - The gifts of bread and wine are taken to the altar and handed to the priest. The priest is to place items on the altar.
 - Remember, when you give something to or take something from the Priest at the altar, give him a slight bow as a sign of respect.
- When the priest pours the wine into the cups, stand by to pick up both the empty wine flask and the water cruet. Return these items to the credence table.
- Next the servers will bring the cruet of water, the dish, and a towel to the right side of the altar.
- The priest will next come to the right side of the altar for the washing of hands. The server will place the dish under the hands of the priest and lightly sprinkle water over the priest's fingers. The server will then offer the towel for the priest to dry his hands.
- Following the washing of hands the water, dish, towel and empty wine cruet may be returned to the credence table. The servers return to stand by the kneelers
- **Invitation to Prayer (Stand)** as the Priest says "Pray, brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice....." then the servers respond: "May the Lord accept the sacrifice in your hands...."
- **Eucharistic Prayer Introductory Dialogue**
 - Priest: "The Lord be with you." Servers Respond: "And also with you."
 - Priest: "Lift up your hearts." Servers Respond: "We lift them up to the Lord."
 - Priest: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." Servers Respond: "It is right to give him thanks and praise."
- **Sanctus** (Holy, Holy, Holy) recite or sing as appropriate
- **Eucharistic Prayer** (Kneel) and will kneel after the Sanctus
- The ring the bell during the Eucharist prayer at:
 - The gesture of **epiclesis** (moving his hands) over the bread and wine, which is the invocation of the Holy Spirit.
 - Bread Consecration-when the priest raises the bread above his head following.. "*This is my body which will be given up for you.*"
 - Wine Consecration- when the priest raises the chalice of wine above his head following..."*Do this in memory of me.*"

- **Note on Bell ringing:** Because the elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus are solemn times, (the bread and wine we offered just before has now become the real BODY and BLOOD Jesus) we should ring the bells reverently. At these times it is proper to look at the elevated Jesus and say to yourself "My Lord and my God." following the example of St. Thomas the Apostle.
- **Amen (Stand)** at the end of the Amen.
- **Lord's Prayer:** During the Our Father, servers stand with in the orans (Arms Extended up) position or with hands folded at their chest in prayer.
- **Sign of Peace:** Share a handshake with others in the sanctuary. Do not go out into the pews.
- **Breaking of Bread:** at the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) Kneel after the third "Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world..."
- **Communion:** Stand after the priest finishes his Communion from the chalice and then be prepared to accept Communion.
- Once the servers receive Communion, move to credence table area and stand reverently in prayer until Communion is completed.
- Once Communion is completed, the servers should return to the side of the altar with the water cruet so the priest can purify vessels.
- Remove items (sacred vessels, linens, etc) from the altar and bring them to the credence table when purification is completed. This is preferable done by being handed these items by a priest or minister, but if the priest has already sat down, you may go and retrieve them yourself.
- When servers have completed all Communion tasks they are to go to their chairs and stand until the priest returns to sit. They will all sit down together.
- At the dismissal, the servers are to move to the foot of the altar. If they processed in with items they will process out with the same and in the same order as they entered. The cue to move is when the priest announces, "The Mass has ended, go in peace."
- After the procession, the servers return the sanctuary.
 - Extinguish altar candles.
 - Ask other lay ministers if they need help with cleanup of the sanctuary or set up for the next Mass.
 - Only carry what you can reverently carry in both hands. Make several trips if necessary. Again, do not rush.
- Servers hang their vestments in the closet.

Alter Server Introduction Thank you for interest to serve God and our parish community at Mass by becoming an altar server. Being an altar server is a special privilege. Not everyone is prepared to accept the responsibilities and commitment required.

We all come to Mass to show God that we love him and need him in our lives. Every person has a job, to worship God, when they come to Mass. Some people have special jobs to make that worship exceptional. The choir helps us to praise God with music. The lector helps us to hear God's word. The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion help to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ. Ushers help people to feel welcome at our church, take up the offering and assist as needed. Religious Education (CCD) teachers help us to understand all that God has done for us and how we can better show our appreciation to Him. Many people help us in many ways when we come to serve God and worship him.

You accept an extraordinary job too as an altar server. You need to know that serving during Mass is a very special honor and God will bless you with many graces as His servant at the altar. You are unique and important to God and He loves you. It pleases God to have you active in what we do as a parish.

Remember to be reverent while performing your duties. The entire congregation is watching. It is said the best servers are those who are transparent. In other words never cause the focus to be taken away from the Mass and directed towards you.

It's not just what servers do, but also how they do it! Besides assisting the priest and other ministers, they're also an example for the entire congregation to follow. The people in the pews take their cue from servers. If servers perform duties in a hurried, sloppy or distracted manner the message it sends is, *"Nothing important is going on here, the altar servers aren't even paying attention or being reverent."*

Some Important Tips for Altar Servers: It is sometimes hard to remember all of these tips, but they are important habits that all servers must learn. The server will look much better and show the respect required of their service in this sacred liturgy if they do the following:

- Arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled Mass to properly prepare for the service.
- Make sure that you serve when you are scheduled or arrange a substitute if you can't make it. The Parish is depending on you!
- If you have a cell phone, turn it off before entering the church.
- Dress properly. Do not wear any clothing that is distracting. Clean comfortable subdued clothes should be worn under the vestments. Flashy multicolored, oversized or beach variety clothes that can be seen under the vestment clash with the otherwise dignified vestments worn by the celebrant.
- Wear neat, clean and secure shoes. No flip-flops or bright colored gym shoes.

- Show proper reverence. When you enter or leave the sanctuary before Mass make a bow or genuflect towards the tabernacle. Do the same things when you cross the center of the tabernacle, for example when you're lighting candles.
- Servers should be aware of their posture during Mass.
 - During Mass unless you are holding something, whether you are standing, walking or kneeling., fold your hands in a prayerful reverent way, Hold your hands at lower chest height.
 - If you are holding something that can be held in one hand, you should place other hand against your chest/heart.
 - When sitting, rest your arms on your legs or fold them in your lap. Don't cross your legs or swing them. Try to keep your feet on the floor. Sit quietly and do not fidget.
 - Move slowly, purposefully, reverently and dignified about the sanctuary.
 - It is irreverent to fix or play with your hair, to finger your ears or nose or to be gazing around the church or daydreaming when assisting at Mass. Keep your attention on the priest's actions and on Mass.
- Keep talking to an absolute minimum during the Mass. If you must speak, try to not face the congregation and talk in whispers near the ear of the other person.
- Servers should help each other out. If someone forgot something, it's easier and less distracting to do it yourself rather than trying to correct the other server.
- If you make a mistake, don't make it a big deal over it or draw attention to the mistake. If you recover smoothly chances are no one will even notice. Act like you know what you're doing, and people will think that you are doing your job correctly!
- Generally, when you give something to or take something from the Priest, give him a slight bow as a sign of respect at the end of the action.
- Never chew gum, have mints, other candies or cough drops in your mouth during Mass.
- Servers are not supposed to be laughing or talking while serving. It is OK to be happy at Mass, to be joyful in service or to smile, but not to be silly!
- Servers know the Mass so they can not only assist the priest, but also reciting the prayers.
- If you see that the servers are not available at Mass, please volunteer to serve. Normally only one server is needed and certainly no more than 2 unless requested by the priest.

Prayers for the Altar Servers

Purify me, O Lord,
and make me clean of heart
That through Your graces
I may serve at Your Altar with dignity and respect

and that I may be worthy to receive Your Word at this Liturgy,
witness Your changing of our gifts of bread and wine
into Your precious Body and Blood
and through Your gift possess eternal joy.
Amen

O God, You have graciously called me
to serve You upon Your altar.
Grant me the graces that I need
to serve You faithfully and wholeheartedly.
Grant too that while serving You,
may I follow the example of St. Tarcisius,
who died protecting the Eucharist,
and walk the same path that led him to Heaven.
St. Tarcisius, pray for me and for all servers.
Amen.

Patron Saints of Altar Servers

St. Tarcisius: Tarcisius was a twelve-year-old acolyte (server) during one of the fierce Roman persecutions of the third century, probably during that of Emperor Valerian. Each day, from a secret meeting place in the catacombs where Christians gathered for Mass, a deacon would be sent to the prisons to carry the Eucharist to those Christians condemned to die. At one point, there was no deacon to send and so Tarcisius was sent carrying the "Holy Mysteries" to those in prison. On the way, boys his own age who were not Christians, but knew him as a playmate and lover of games stopped him. He was asked to join their games, but this time he refused and the crowd of boys noticed that he was carrying something. Somehow, he was recognized as a Christian, and the small gang of boys, anxious to view the Christian "Mysteries," became a mob and turned upon Tarcisius with fury. He went down under the blows, and it is believed that a fellow Christian drove off the mob and rescued the young man. The mangled body of Tarcisius was carried back to the catacombs, but the boy died on the way from his injuries. He was buried in the cemetery of St. Callistus, and the church of San Silvestro in Capite claims his relics. Tarcisius, one of the patron saints of altar boys, has always been an example of youthful courage and devotion, and his story was one that was told again and again to urge others to a like heroism in suffering for their faith.

St. John Berchmans: Eldest son of a shoemaker, John was born at Diest, Brabant. From an early age he wanted to be a priest, and when thirteen became a servant in the household of one of the Cathedral canons at Malines, John Froymont. In 1615, he entered the newly founded Jesuit College at Malines, and the following year became a Jesuit novice. He was sent to Rome in 1618 to continue his studies, and was known for his diligence and piety, impressing all with his holiness and stress on perfection in little things. He died there on August 13. Many miracles were attributed to him after his death, and he was canonized in 1888. He is the patron of altar boys. His feast day is November 26.

Definitions and Terminology

Ablution Cup – A covered dish of water on the side of the tabernacle, which is used by the priest, deacon, or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist to wash their fingers after distributing Communion.

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.

Aspersory: The container for the holy water from which the aspergillum may be dipped.

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.

Decanter -The large wine pitcher.

Epiclesis: Term referring in a strict sense to the invocation (asking) of the Father to send the Holy Spirit on the Church's gifts.

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

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.

Lavabo Bowl: The utensil used to wash the priest's hands in a ritual purification in preparation for the Consecration.

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 its 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. No other use is allowed.

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.

Sepulchrum: The cavity on the altar in which the relic(s) of the patron saints of that church are incased.

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 bowls 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.