

Directions for Serving Mass at the Altar

Introductory Rites (Beginning of Mass)

Book Bearer

1. After the Gloria is sung (or if the Gloria is omitted, after the Penitential Rite), the presider will say "Let us pray," at which time the Server responsible for the Presider's Book (the *Roman Missal*) comes to the presider's chair, takes the *Roman Missal* from the Presider's table, stands in front of or to one side of the presider (as directed by the presider, so as not to block the assembly's view) and holds the *Roman Missal* for him. Hold the book so the priest can reach it and read from it easily. Hold the bottom of the book firmly in both hands, with the top leaning against the upper part of your chest. Or, if you are taller, hold the book standing more to priest's side and your hands extended. Be sure that the book is right side up so that the priest won't have to turn it before he can read from it. Finally, be sure that you are looking at the priest when holding the book. DO NOT turn glance around and look at the congregation; focus!
2. You should join the people in the penitential rite and the Gloria. You should know the prayers and responses of the Mass by heart, and be able to say or sing them with the people. It is not as hard as you may think because the same prayers will be used over and over again.
3. When the priest finishes the Opening Prayer, called the Collect (which usually ends with the words " ..for ever and ever" or " ... through Christ our Lord"), the server says "Amen" with the people and returns the *Roman Missal* to its place presider's table.
4. When you walk carrying the book, do not hold it loosely at your side but use both hands and carry it in front of you.
5. When all the servers are at their places, all should sit down together.

Liturgy of the Word

1. Sit quietly and listen to the Scripture readings. Be turned slightly toward the ambo and be attentive to what the reader is saying. The readings are the WORD OF GOD: God is speaking to us here and now! That demands our full attention, nothing less. The people in church may even be more ready to give their attention to the Lector if they see you giving them a good example.
2. At the end of each reading before the Gospel, join the people as they say, "Thanks be to God!"

3. Join the people in singing or saying the response to the first reading. Use a booklet or song book if the response is too long or hard to remember easily.
4. We honor the reading of the Holy Gospel in special ways, because in the Gospel we learn what Jesus said and did. We always stand for the Gospel. At our parish, the people greet the reading of the Gospel with song, and you should join them in singing. After the priest or deacon has finished reading the Gospel, join the people in responding, "*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*"
5. Sit down for the homily.
6. After the homily, sometimes there will be an RCIA Dismissal. The server who holds the book, should take the RCIA Lectionary Dismissal Book (know what this book looks like) from the credence table and give it to the priest.
7. Stand for the profession of faith (the Creed) and for the Prayer of the Faithful. You may have to hold the book for the priest during this time.
8. Say the profession of faith with the people. During the Prayer of the Faithful, join the people in the words "*Lord, hear our prayer.*" After the priest says the prayer that ends the Prayer of the Faithful, return the book to its place on the presider's table.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Bread and Wine

1. During the Song of Preparation, two servers dress the altar with the corporal, Priest's Chalice and *Roman Missal*. The large corporal should be placed in the center of the altar. The chalice goes on the piece of clear plastic to the right of the corporal while the *Roman Missal* normally goes to the left of the corporal. **Note: please check with the priest/presider before Mass begins to confirm where he wants you to place the *Roman Missal*. Some presiders prefer that the *Roman Missal* be put in the center of the altar, close to the edge nearest him as he stands before the altar.**
2. A server (or if there are not enough servers to do this, then the Sacristan) brings all of the cups and purificators to the altar and places them on the plexi-glass square on the right side of the altar (facing the assembly)

3. During the Song of Preparation, the cross bearer retrieves the cross from its stand near the Sacristy door and the candle bearers retrieve the candles from the Credence Table. Together (cross bearer leading) they proceed down the center aisle to the Gifts Table, located in the center of the Church near the break in the pews. There the servers wait until the gifts are ready to be brought up to the altar. The cross bearer leads the candle bearers, followed by the gift bearers, to the altar. When the cross bearer reaches the top step in front of the altar, he/she pauses for a moment and then walks to the left to return the cross to its stand in front of the Sacristy door. The candle bearers pause for a moment at the top step in front of the altar before returning their candles to the Credence Table.
4. When the gifts are brought forward by members of the parish, two servers should follow the priest to meet them, one standing on either side of the priest. The servers receiving the gifts should only carry the bread and wine to the altar. **Please do not place anything on the altar, but wait on the “Sacristy” side of the altar for the priest to come to the altar.**
5. **At the same time, another server or the Sacristan brings the cruet of water and comes to stand with the servers holding the bread and wine.** Pay attention to what the priest is doing. Be sure to take the stopper off the cruet and face the handle away from you so it is easy for the priest to take it.
6. **Then the server carrying the ciborium with the bread to be consecrated hands the ciborium to the priest. After the priest offers the bread to God and places it on the corporal, the server holding the cruet gives it to the priest, who pours a drop of water into the flagon of wine to be consecrated, while saying the appropriate prayer. After the water has been added to the flagon of wine, the server holding the flagon hands the flagon to the priest who pours some of the wine into the chalice and the remainder of the wine into the cups on the plexi-glass square. After the wine is poured out, the priest moves all of the cups to the corporal.**
7. After all of the servers have handed the ciborium and flagon to the priest and after the priest has mixed the water with the flagon, one server retrieves the empty flagon then the servers bow in unison to the priest and return to their places while the server with the empty flagon places it on the credence table.
5. As soon as the priest places the ciborium, chalice and cups on the corporal, two servers should be ready with the cruet, purificator bowl, and finger towel and stand at “the step”. When the priest is bowing after saying the prayer over the wine, begin to walk towards him and when he puts out his hands, pour a little water over his hands, into the purificator bowl. The server holding the towel should then offer the towel to the priest. Bow to the priest when he finishes and place the towel, bowl, and cruet back on the credence table and return to your seat.
6. All servers then proceed to “the step”.

Eucharistic Prayer:

1. Join the people in answering the priest as he begins the Eucharistic Prayer and join in singing the *Holy, Holy, Holy*.
2. After this hymn, kneel with the rest of the congregation.
3. At the end of the Eucharistic prayer, the priest holds up the Body and Blood of Christ, and then sings or says, "Through him, and with him, and in him, O God almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours for ever and ever." Join the people in singing or saying, "Amen." This is your way of saying that you want to join your praise of God the Father to that of his Son Jesus and that of everyone in the church. Mean what you say when you say this "Amen."
5. Then stand for the Our Father and say or sing it with the priest and the people.
6. It is very important that you not move around or touch your face or hair during this time. That can be very distracting

Communion Rite:

1. After the Our Father, give the sign of peace to the other servers, as well as to the priest.
2. Bring any ciboria from the credence table to the altar and place them to the right of the corporal
2. After the priest finishes the *Fraction Rite*, that is, after he finishes breaking the main host and distributing the smaller hosts into the ciboria, return to the Sacristy side of the altar to stand to the left of the Eucharistic Ministers at "the step".
3. Receive communion with the Eucharistic Ministers. Then return to and remain standing at your seat and pray while the rest of the people receive communion.
5. During the time the assembly is receiving communion, "undress the altar" by removing the *Roman Missal* and returning it to the presider's tabler. Fold up the purificator and place it over the Chalice, place the Pall on top of the Chalice, fold the corporal and place it on top of the Pall. Take everything off of the altar and place it on the Credence Table for purification by the Sacristan or Eucharistic Ministers.
6. Return to your seat, but remain standing in solidarity with the rest of the Assembly.
7. When all the Eucharistic Ministers have returned their ciboria to the Credence Table, the Sacristan will consolidate the extra hosts into one or more ciboria and take it (them) to Tabernacle.

8. After the ciborium has been returned to the Tabernacle, please be seated for a brief period of silent reflection. This is the time to think about all the wonderful things God has done for you and those you love. Give God thanks for these great gifts, especially for the gift of his Son, whom you have just received.
9. When indicated by the presider who stands and says “Let us pray,” the server responsible for the *Roman Missal*, the Book Bearer, takes it from the presider’s table and hold it for him as he leads the assembly in the *Prayer after Communion*. After the Prayer after communion, replace the *Roman Missal* on the presider’s table and return to your seat for the announcements.

Concluding Rites (End of Mass)

1. After the announcements the Book Bearer should go to the priest when he stands, take the *Roman Missal* from the table next to the presider’s chair, and hold it for the presider to bless the assembly with the *final blessing*. After the *final blessing*, the server replaces the *Roman Missal* on presider’s table. This server then walks from the presider’s chair to join the candle bearers. The Cross Bearer, then retrieves the processional cross from its stand near the Sacristy door.
2. After the priest gives the final blessing, the Candle Bearers go and retrieve the processional candles from the Credence Table. They take the candles and line up behind the presider, who is has kissed the altar and is now facing it, with his back to the assembly. The Cross Bearer stands behind the Candle Bearers, who are behind the Book Bearer and Acolyte, and is nearest the gates in the communion rail. All face the altar.
3. When the presider bows to the altar, the servers turn and lead the procession down the main aisle to the Washington Boulevard Narthex. The order of procession is: Cross Bearer, the two Candle Bearers (side by side), the remaining servers (two by two, or if there is only one extra server, that server follows the Candle Bearers, but walks in the center of the aisle). The priest (and deacon, if a deacon is present) is the last in the procession.

Notes from the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2002 Revision)

¶173: *Procession of Gifts.* The only ones allowed to place the elements on the altar are the priest and the deacon.

Note also: EMs do not take elements from the altar, but are given them by the priest (¶162).

Monetary offerings are to be put in a suitable place *but away from the Eucharistic table.*

¶183: *Fraction Rite.* The participation of the laity in this action is an abuse (see *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, ¶173). Participation in the fraction rite *is reserved to the priest and the deacon.*

All wine is to be poured at the preparation of the gifts and the pouring of consecrated wine is to be completely avoided (see *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, ¶106), in case something detrimental to the sacrament should occur.

Postures

A "posture" is how you are using the parts of your body at a particular time. A server has to carry out a number of different actions at Mass, and so there are a number of different postures.

Walking We do a lot of walking every day, and sometimes we get sloppy as we do it. Don't walk down the aisle or around the sanctuary stiffly like a tin soldier, but don't lumber around like a grizzly bear either. Walk with your back straight and your head held high.

Bowing When you bow in reverence, it should be a smooth forward inclining of your head and shoulders. When you bow to the altar, bow deeply at the waist and bring yourself slowly to your full height. When you bow to the priest, bow your head slowly and gracefully. Don't walk and bow at the same time: *stop* before bowing. General rule: head bow to someone and profound bow to something (i.e.; the altar, at the Eucharistic prayer, when receiving communion).

General rule for bowing - you do not need to bow to the altar when you are carrying a liturgical implement. You do bow at the center of the altar when you are not carrying anything and crossing the altar's path.

At Preparation of the Gifts: After the priest uses the cruet & also after washing his hands, head bow as a sign of respect.

At the Eucharistic Prayer, just after the priest has elevated the host and then kneels, all servers reverently bow (just follow the priest's indication when he genuflects after he holds up the host and then the cup).

When you receive communion: bow just prior to receiving both the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood.

Genuflecting is only required when in the presence of the Tabernacle. When you genuflect, keep your hands in front of your chest while you go down on your right knee. Keep your body upright. Make sure that your alb isn't going to trip you on the way down or up.

Kneeling When you kneel, your body should be upright and your hands should be in front of your chest, well above your waist.

Hands Unless you are sitting down or carrying something (like a candle or cross), your hands should be kept joined in front of your chest: either locked together, or palm to palm, fingers pointing upward. Keep your hands high up on your chest. If you are carrying something in one hand, hold the other hand flat on your chest.

Eyes During Mass, always look towards the place where the action is happening: the presider's chair, the ambo, or the altar. When you talk to someone, you want that person to look at you, right? The same is true at Mass. Look at the priest and the other ministers as they speak and act in the sanctuary, and even look at the people in the pews. This tells the other people in church that you know they are there.

General Appearance Know what you are to do while serving Mass and when you are to do it. Don't look as if serving Mass is the worst punishment or the most unpleasant thing you can think of. Don't be afraid to smile as you serve Mass. An ancient prayer in the Bible says, "I will go to the altar of God, to God who gives joy to my youth" (*Ps 42:4, Vulgate*). As you do what you are supposed to be doing, be aware of what you need to do next. Don't fidget nervously around the sanctuary. Be relaxed and comfortable. Be yourself. Remember to listen, sing, and pray with the other people who have gathered to worship God. Remember what an important service you are giving to God and God's people, and do your best.

Singing Whenever the congregation sings, so should the altar server. Remember, this is a ministry that should be modeling prayer. So, just as the presider sings in processions, etc., so should the altar server.

Remember: You don't have to be able to sing like an angel; just sing the best you can.

When to Sit, Stand, and Kneel at Mass

During the:

You should:

INTRODUCTORY RITES:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Sign of the Cross | STAND |
| Greeting | STAND |
| Introduction | STAND |
| Penitential Rite or Sprinkling | STAND |
| "Gloria" | STAND |
| Opening Prayer | STAND |

LITURGY OF THE WORD:

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| First Reading | SIT |
| Responsorial Psalm | SIT |
| Second Reading | SIT |
| Gospel Acclamation | STAND |
| Gospel Reading | STAND |
| Homily | SIT |
| Profession of Faith | STAND |
| Prayer of the Faithful | STAND |

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Preparation of the Gifts | STAND (<i>It is up to you to start preparing the altar. Thereafter, you assist the presider with receiving the gifts</i>) |
| Prayer over the Gifts | STAND |
| Preface | STAND |
| Eucharistic Prayer | KNEEL |
| Our Father | STAND |
| Sign of Peace | STAND |
| "Lamb of God" | STAND |
| Communion | STAND |
| Prayer after Communion | STAND |

CONCLUDING RITES:

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Final Blessing | STAND |
| Dismissal | STAND |

General rule: Follow the posture of the presider

Processions & Rites

Gathering Procession: Beginning of Mass

1. When the priest or sacristan indicates that Mass is about to start, servers go together to retrieve the cross or candles (to whichever one you are assigned) and proceed directly outside the church via the sidewalk to the Washington Boulevard Narthex. If the candles have not already been lit, the sacristan or usher will assist the candle bearers with lighting their candles in the Narthex, prior to the entrance procession.
2. *Only carry the candles if there are three (3) altar servers. Otherwise, one server carries the cross & the other altar server processes behind the cross with hands folded.
3. When the processional music has begun and all are ready to process, you will lead the procession to the altar. The general rule is to start processing (walking) when the singing begins. The cross bearer leads and the candle bearers walk together paced about three pews behind the cross and other servers spaced evenly behind. Walk in a straight line, slowly and with dignity. Please hold the cross and candle sticks directly in front of you, not too low or too high, without swaying these objects back and forth.
4. Sometimes a deacon will participate in the liturgy and be part of the procession, carrying the Book of the Gospels behind the altar servers.
5. When you arrive at the sanctuary, **pause** before the altar and reverence it. If you are carrying the cross or candles, do not bow; simply incline your head. If you have nothing to carry, then reverence the altar with a bow. After reverencing the altar, the cross and candle bearers place the cross and candles in their normal places. The cross bearer returns the cross to its stand near the Sacristy door; the candle bearers place their candles on the Credence Table.
6. General rule: If you are carrying something you **should not** bow before the altar but just pause; however, if you are not carrying anything, then please bow before the altar and proceed to your seat in the sanctuary.

Sprinkling Rite

1. Some times we have the sprinkling rite (to remind people of their baptism). This rite happens in the beginning introductory rites of the Mass (especially during the Easter season).
2. Basically, this involves two (or more) servers to assist at the font. One server holds the *Roman Missal* during the blessing of the water, after which he returns it to the presider's table and then goes to his own seat. The other server(s) is (are) to assist with holding the bowl(s) of holy water for those who will actually sprinkle the people.
3. The server(s) holding the bowl(s) follow(s) alongside the priest (and deacon and/or other ministers) around the congregation while he (they) is (are) sprinkling the people.
4. Remember to try and keep the water bowl steady. Not much water is required in the bucket, which, in the long run is better, so you can keep from getting as wet.
5. After the sprinkling is over, place the container with holy water and the sprinkler on the center counter in the main sacristy and return to your seat.

Sending Procession: End of Mass (Recessional)

1. The Book Bearer holds the presider's book (the *Roman Missal*) for the final blessing. As soon as the final blessing is done, the altar server places the *Roman Missal* back on the presider's table. The Cross Bearer goes to retrieve the processional cross from its stand and then joins up with the other servers.
2. Immediately after the final blessing, the Candle Bearers retrieve the processional candles from the Credence Table and proceed to the front of the altar. The order is priest (and deacon, if present), immediately in front of the altar; behind the priest are servers who are not holding anything ;(Acolyte and Book Bearer) behind them are the Candle Bearers; behind them is the Cross Bearer.
3. Please wait to process out until the priest bows & turns to face the people. Servers bow with the priest. **Remember: if you are holding the cross or a candle, do not bow; simply incline your head as a sign of reverence to the altar.** The Servers turn and, walking in front the priest (& deacon), lead the procession outside. The cross leads and the candles follow.
4. Remember to not walk too fast and keep your spacing. Never "race" out of the church!
5. When you reach the Vestibule, it is desirable to wait and greet the Priest.

6. Candle Bearers then carefully blow out their candles while holding one hand behind the candle to prevent hot liquid wax from being blown onto the floor.
7. Proceed reverently to the Sacristy. **DO NOT RUN!** One server, usually the Cross Bearer, then goes to the Altar and extinguishes the Altar Candles. It is recommended that you use the tool for extinguishing the candles from the Sacristy rather than blowing out the candles.