

2018

Altar Server Handbook



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St. Michael Catholic Church
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1. Introduction: The Celebration of Mass

(16.) The celebration of Mass, as the action of Christ and the People of God arrayed hierarchically, is the center of the whole Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. In it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit. In it, moreover, during the course of the year, the mysteries of redemption are recalled so as in some way to be made present. Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it.

(17.) It is therefore of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass – that is, the Lord’s Supper – be so arranged that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it, according to the proper state of each, may derive from it more abundantly those fruits for the sake of which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it to the Church, his beloved Bride, as the memorial of his Passion and Resurrection.

(18.) This will best be accomplished if, with due regard for the nature and the particular circumstances of each liturgical assembly, the entire celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity, of the sort which is desired by the Church and demanded by the very nature of the celebration, and to which the Christian people have a right and duty by reason of their Baptism.

(From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.)

2. The Role of the Altar Server

Ritual service at liturgical celebrations – and most usually at the Mass – constitutes the essential purpose of the Altar Server. It differs in character from the roles of readers, cantors, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion insofar as the Altar Server has liturgical responsibilities that commence before the Liturgy actually begins, that continue throughout the whole of the liturgical rite, and that extend beyond the Liturgy's close. It differs in character from the roles of priests and deacons insofar as the Altar Server is not an ordained servant. It differs in character from the roles of the people in the pews insofar as the Altar Server prays and sings from the sanctuary. However, it shares in character with all these insofar as the Altar Server is also called to “conscious, active, and full participation” in the Liturgy.

The Altar Server plays a very important role in the Liturgy and for the Eucharistic Assembly. **His or her immediate and primary duty is to assist the presiding priest.** At some liturgies the Altar Server may receive specific instructions directly from a deacon or other Master of Ceremonies; regardless of by whom the Altar Server is led, the Altar Server is always working to help the priest, to help him pray reverently and effectively for the good of the whole parish.

The Altar Server remains in full view of everyone throughout the Liturgy and, thus, is in a unique position to model Christian prayer, worship, reverence, respect, humility, dignity, and modesty for the entire community. When the Altar Server prays and sings with his or her whole mind, heart, and soul the Altar Server gives a good example to others, helping to elicit praying and singing from others.

3. The Responsibilities/Duties of the Altar Server During the Mass

- Carry the Crucifix/Cross or a lit candle in the opening procession to the altar.
- Present The Roman Missal (i.e. “the book”) to the Presider and hold it open and still for him as he reads from it.
- Flank to his right and to his left the deacon or priest who will read the Gospel as he proceeds from his chair to the ambo.
- Present the binder containing the Prayer of the Faithful to (first) the priest, (then) to the deacon, and (finally) back to the priest. Hold the binder open and steady as each reads from it in turn.
- Prepare/Set-Up the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist during Mass.
- Stand to the left and the right of the priest at the foot of the sanctuary in order to receive the Offertory Gifts from representatives of the assembled community. Carry the bread and wine to the altar and present (first) the bread to the deacon or priest, (then) the wine and water.
- Pour water over the priest’s hands as he prays for the washing away of his personal sins. Have the finger towel at the ready for him to dry his hands.
- After the distribution of Holy Communion is finished and the sacred vessels ritually cleansed at the altar by the priest and/or deacon, accept the vessels and return them to the credence table.
- Prepare, carry, and present the thurible and the boat at those times and on those occasions when incense is to be used in a Liturgy.
- Pray, sing, and listen attentively during the Liturgy. Follow the action. Provide a good example to all the faithful.

- Serve the priest – who acts *in persona Christi* (i.e. in the person of Christ) – with respect, humility, and dignity.
- Act always and everywhere according to your baptism: as a Child of God and a faithful Roman Catholic. Be prayerful, reverent, respectful of authority, humble, modest, and charitable/loving.

4. Scheduling

The Altar Server is expected to make a serious and firm commitment to his/her duties and responsibilities. **Since most Altar Servers are not yet of age to drive an automobile, it must be pointed out that the Altar Server’s parents or guardians are themselves expected to make a serious and firm commitment to their sons’ and daughters’ altar service.**

- **The Altar Server is to arrive at least 15 MINUTES prior to his or her scheduled Liturgy, and must sign in as notice of his or her presence.**
- **The Altar Server is responsible for finding his or her own substitute when he or she is unable to serve as scheduled.**
- Mark your calendar as soon as you receive a schedule. Keep your roster of Altar Servers should you ever need to secure a substitute. Do not call the rectory, the office, or any parish authority asking them to find a substitute; the responsibility to do so is yours.
- If an Altar Server comes to have three (3) “unexcused absences,” he or she will not be scheduled to serve after that. An “unexcused absence” is defined as a failure either (1) to appear and serve as scheduled or (2) to secure a substitute when circumstances beyond your control prevent you serving as scheduled. Even repeated “excused” absences (when noticed) may result in that Altar Server being scheduled less frequently or even not at all.

5. Code of Conduct

- **Walking** – Walk with your shoulders back, with a straight back, and with your head held high.
- **Kneeling** – Your body is to be upright. Do not slump, slouch, or sit back on your heels.
- **Standing** – Stand straight and tall with both feet firmly planted on the floor. Position your feet pointing straight ahead, not splayed or flared. Stand with your feet slightly separated, but no more than shoulder-length apart. Do not lock your knees, but occasionally flex one or both very slightly to maintain comfort and proper circulation. Do not lean against furniture, walls, or other supports. Do not slouch. Keep your shoulders back, back straight, and head erect. Keep your hands folded in front of you when not holding something in them.
- **Sitting** – Sit still. Do not fidget. Sit up straight, place your hands in your lap and keep them still. Keep both feet still and flat on the floor; do not cross your legs. Cultivate a sense of inner peace and calm by disciplining and training your body.
- **Hands** – Hands should be kept folded/joined in front of your chest unless you are sitting down or carrying something (e.g. a candle, a cross, etc.).
- **Eyes and Ears** – Look toward the place where the action is happening during the Liturgy. This will include the celebrant's chair, the ambo, and the altar. Listen to the readers proclaim the Word of God. Listen to the homily. Listen to and enter into praying with the priest as he offers the liturgical prayers to God.
- **Mouth** – Pray and sing. Otherwise, do not talk during Mass or other liturgical rite (unless a need arises). Do not come to Mass or serve in the

sanctuary chewing gum, sucking on candy, or with any other consumable other than water in your mouth. In order to receive Holy Communion, every Catholic is required to fast the one hour immediately preceding the reception of the Eucharist. The Altar Server is required and expected to honor this fast. **(Note: the taking of needed medicine – whether prescription or over-the-counter – does not break the fast. Medicine must be taken at the time it should be taken, and taken without fail; a person may receive Holy Communion even if he or she took medicine orally within the preceding hour.)**

6. Dress Code

- Dress properly: meaning cleanly, modestly, and “dressier” (i.e. more formally). The Altar Server must dress appropriately even though his or her clothing may not show underneath the alb one will wear. Wear dress shoes, which are to be clean and “understated” (i.e. they are not to draw attention). Athletic shoes and high heels are not considered appropriate shoe wear. Flip-flops are not permitted at any time.
- The Altar Server wears a white alb, which he or she belts with a cincture. Make sure the alb is long enough to cover your ankles.

7. Before/Preceding the Start of the Liturgy

- The Altar Server is to arrive at the church at least **15 minutes** before Mass begins.
- The Altar Server is to sign-in.
- Do not be loud or rambunctious in the sacristy.
- The Altar Server is to next vest in order to attend to pre-liturgical duties.
 - Make sure your alb fits properly. All Velcro strips or snaps are to be bound.
- The Altar Server is to light the candles for use in the Liturgy. Use a gold candle lighter when lighting the candles. The Easter Candle is lit during the Easter Season, for Baptisms, and for the Rite of Christian Burial (i.e. for Funerals).
- The Altar Server is to check/verify that the credence table has been set as needed.
 - Needed is one (1) chalice covered by one (1) purificator.
 - Needed is one (1) cruet filled with water.
 - Needed is one (1) clean finger bowl and one (1) finger towel.
 - Needed at all Sunday Masses (which includes the Saturday Vigil Mass) are some number of Communion plates, one or more of which will likely contain unconsecrated bread.
 - Needed at the 8:30 and 10:30 (a.m.) Sunday Masses are four (4) Communion cups, each already containing unconsecrated wine and a few drops of plain water. Needed with these Communion cups are four (4) purificators.

- Needed at the 8:30 and 10:30 (a.m.) Sunday Masses are three (3) extra purificators for use in the event some of the Precious Blood is spilled during the distribution of Holy Communion.
- The Altar Server is assigned a role to play at each Liturgy in which he or she serves. One's role may be as a Crucifix/Cross Bearer, a Candle Bearer, Thurifer, and/or as Book Bearer, Altar Preparer, Bell Ringer.
 - (An experienced Altar Server acting as a mentor to an aspiring Altar Server must be careful to provide direction and support to his or her young charge diligently, effectively, efficiently, respectfully, and unobtrusively. Each and every Altar Server is to be trained to serve comfortably in every possible role. Each and every Altar Server, regardless of seniority or physical size, is to have the opportunity to serve in any and all roles. If there are to be two (2) or more candles carried, it is best and preferred that those candles be carried by Altar Servers of the same or similar height. The Altar Server who is of a much different height than the others – even if that Altar Server is much smaller than the other two – is to be the one to carry the Crucifix/Cross.)
 - The Altar Server is to check with the presiding priest, the assisting deacon, and/or any Master of Ceremonies present to see if there are any additional or special preparations or accommodations to be made for that particular Liturgy.
 - **The Altar Server is to be standing at the back of the church no less than five (5) full minutes before the scheduled start time of the Mass.** The Processional Crucifix/Cross and lit Processional Candles are to be ready at hand.

8. The Introductory Rites of the Mass

(46.) The rites preceding the Liturgy of the Word, namely the Entrance, Greeting, Act of Penitence, *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and collect, have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation.

Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

In certain celebrations that are combined with Mass according to the norms of the liturgical books, the Introductory Rites are omitted or performed in a particular way.

(From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal)

- **The Entrance** – Process shoulder to shoulder with your partner. Candle Bearers are to maintain the candles at the same height as one another, and to hold them straight up and down. The Cross Bearer is to hold the crucifix/cross straight up and down. All held items are to be kept still and are not to be swaying as they are carried. Walk slowly, evenly, and dignified down the aisle. Neither weave nor waver: maintain a straight line and continuous pace.
- **Processional Order**
 - First: The Thurifer carrying the thurible and the boat. (A Thurifer will not be needed at most Liturgies.)
 - First (or second if there is a Thurifer): The Crucifix/Cross Bearer.

- Next: Two (2) or more Candle Bearers walking (two-by-two) side-by-side and staying a steady two(2) or three (3) pew-lengths behind the Crucifix/Cross Bearer.
- If there is only one (1) Altar Server, then he or she is to carry the crucifix/cross (and not a candle).
- If there are only two (2) Altar Servers, then one is to carry the crucifix/cross and the other is to carry nothing, processing behind the Cross Bearer with his or her hands folded as specified.
- If candles are not carried in the opening procession, two (2) candles are to be lit before Mass starts and placed in their places in the sanctuary for use in the Liturgy of the Word.
- (Any and all aspiring Altar Servers in training at a particular Liturgy are to follow immediately behind their respective mentors, “shadowing” his or her every move. This shadowing is to continue from the beginning through the end of the Liturgy.)
- Once the Crucifix/Cross Bearer and any Candle Bearers enter the sanctuary, they are to stop in front of the altar with the Cross Bearer in the middle and the Candle Bearers flanking on either side. The Altar Servers are to pause in front of the altar **only long enough to arrange themselves together in a straight line. ALTAR SERVERS HOLDING ANYTHING IN THEIR HANDS (e.g. the Crucifix/Cross or a candle) ARE NOT TO BOW BEFORE THE ALTAR.** Once the Altar Servers have arranged themselves in a straight line they are to **immediately** move away to their proper places (putting the crucifix and the candles in their proper places on the way to the seats).

- **Holding the Roman Missal** – Stand in front of the presiding priest at the designated times. (Your cue will always be the priest saying, “Let us pray.”) The Roman Missal must be held so the presider can reach it and read from it easily. If confident to do so, the Altar Server presenting the Roman Missal or other liturgical book should have that book open to the correct page when coming to the priest. The bottom of the book must be held firmly and **still** with both hands, and with the top of the book leaning against the upper part of your chest. Make sure the book is right side up. Again, **the Altar Server is to be standing still and is to be holding the book still.**
- Any other Altar Servers in attendance are to stand and remain at their places, attentive, prayerful, and with hands folded in front of them. After the Collect (also known as the “Opening Prayer”) the other Altar Servers are to wait for the Book Bearer to return to his or her own place, then all are to sit down together.

9. Liturgy of the Word

(55.) The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. The homily, Profession of Faith, and Prayer of the Faithful, however, develop and conclude this part of the Mass. For in the readings, as explained by the homily, God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God's word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world.

(56.) The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided. During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily.

(From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal)

- Sit quietly and listen attentively to the Scripture readings, including the Psalm. Learn for the good of your own soul. Set a good example for others in attendance.
- When the priest or deacon stands to proceed to the ambo in order to read the Gospel, two (2) Altar Servers are to each pick-up a lit candle and lead the proclaimer to the center of the sanctuary in front of the altar. The Candle Bearers are to be one on the right and one on the left of the deacon or priest before the altar. **THE CANDLE BEARERS ARE NOT TO BOW. THEY ARE TO STAND STRAIGHT, KEEPING THE CANDLES LEVEL AND EVEN WITH EACH OTHER.** The Candle Bearers will remain where they are while the Book of the Gospels is elevated and honored with the singing of the Gospel Acclamation. The Altar Servers are to sing the “Alleluia’s” along with all the other faithful. Then the two (2) Candle Bearers are to proceed with the proclaimer to the ambo; one Altar Server will lead the deacon or priest and the other Altar Server will follow the deacon or priest. These two (2) Candle Bearers will stand at attention on either side of the ambo while the Gospel is read. At the Gospel’s end, the two (2) Altar Servers will move back to the center and pause before returning to their seats to hear the homily. **Again, THE CANDLE BEARERS ARE NOT TO BOW AT THE ALTAR.**
- Participate in the Mass by singing all Responsorial Responses, the Psalm Refrain, and by saying clearly, “Thanks be to God,” “Glory to You, Oh Lord,” and “Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Listen attentively to the homily.
- Pray clearly and distinctly the Profession of Faith (i.e. the Nicene Creed).

- After the Creed, the Altar Server is to bring the three-ring notebook (which contains the Prayers of the Faithful) to the priest. Open it for the priest. The priest will read a brief invitation to prayer, then the Altar Server is to move over in front of the deacon so he may read the petitions/intercessions. When the deacon is finished with the petitions, the Altar Server is to move back in front of the priest so he may read an ending prayer. Then the Altar Server is to return the notebook to the table and himself or herself to his or her seat.
- Respond after each intercession, “Lord, hear our prayer.

10. Liturgy of the Eucharist

(72.) At the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet, by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory.

For Christ took the bread and the chalice and gave thanks; he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat, and drink: this is my Body; this is the cup of my Blood. Do this in memory of me.” Accordingly, the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ:

1. At the Preparation of the Gifts, the bread and the wine with water are brought to the altar, the same elements that Christ took into his hands.
2. In the Eucharistic Prayer, thanks is given to God for the whole work of salvation, and the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ.

3. Through the fraction and through Communion, the faithful, though they are many, receive from the one bread the Lord's Body and from the one chalice the Lord's Blood in the same way the Apostles received them from Christ's own hands.

(From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal)

- **Procession with Gifts and Preparation of, and at, the Altar**

- An Altar Server is to place the large Roman Missal, along with the stand on which it is sitting, on the altar.
- An Altar Server is to take the chalice (and its coverings), any communion plates containing unconsecrated bread, and any communion cups containing unconsecrated wine (along with an equal number of purificators) from the credence table to the altar.
- Two (2) Altar Servers are to accompany the priest to the foot of the sanctuary in order to assist him in receiving the gifts (i.e. the symbolic "first fruits") presented by the community for sacrificing.
- The priest will give the received gifts to the attending Altar Servers who are to take them to the altar. The unconsecrated bread is to be handed directly to the priest (or to a deacon if one is present). **An Altar Server is not to ever put the bread on the altar himself or herself. He or she is to wait for a deacon or priest to receive the bread from him or her.** The Altar Server carrying the wine is to pick –up the water from the credence table on the way to the altar.
- Once the gifts are prepared by the priest for sacrificing, the priest will ritually purify himself for the sacrifice. Two (2) Altar Servers

are to approach the priest at the altar, **one Altar Server is to bring both the finger bowl and the cruet containing water; while the other Altar Server is to bring the finger towel, unfolding it as he or she comes. PLEASE NOTICE WHO CARRIES WHAT: one person will have only the opened towel and the other will have water and the bowl. The ONE Altar Server is to pour water over the priest's hands while also holding the bowl to catch the water. POUR THE WATER GENEROUSLY. The OTHER Altar Server then presents the opened towel to the priest so he may dry his hands. Do not bring the waterless cleanser to the priest.**

- **The Eucharistic Prayer**

- All Altar Servers will then take their places at the foot of the altar. You are to stand reverently, straight and tall, with your hands folded in front of you, and your minds and hearts pure. Make all required responses out-loud along with the assembled faithful, including singing the “Holy, Holy, Holy.”
- All Altar Servers are to kneel for the Eucharistic Prayer. Remain still, with backs straight and erect. Fold your hands.
- At that point in the Eucharistic Prayer when the priest holds his hands over the bread and wine, an Altar Server rings the bells **once, and briefly, and not loudly**. Again, at this moment the Altar Server rings the bells once, briefly, and not so loudly that they cover up the prayer beings said by the priest.

- At the consecration of the Eucharist the priest will elevate/raise up first the Body of Christ and second the Blood of Christ. When the Body of Christ is elevated an Altar Server rings the bells **three (3) short times with a distinct break between each ring**. When the Blood of Christ is elevated the Altar Server will again ring the bells **three (3) short times with a distinct break between each ring**. Again, at the elevation of first the Body and then the Blood the Altar Server rings the bells three (3) times for each, but the rings are to be brief and distinct, not “run together” or be one prolonged ringing.
- (At the elevation it is appropriate and traditional for the faithful to make a silent prayer of humility and adoration when each elevation occurs. When the priest raises the Consecrated Body, the Altar Server would do well to bow his or her head and pray silently, “My Lord and my God.” When the priest raises the Consecrated Blood, the Altar Server would do well to bow his or her head again and this time to pray silently, “My Lord and my God, Jesus have mercy on me.”)
- Acclaim out-loud the “Mystery of Faith.”
- Acclaim out-loud the “Great Amen” at the close of the Eucharistic Prayer.

- **The Communion Rite**

- Pray out-loud the “Our Father.”
- Make all proper responses to prayers out-loud at their specified times.

- At the “Sign of Peace” offer your hand to your fellow Altar Servers. However, if you have a cold or are sick, please refrain from shaking hands and simply say “Peace” to people. Also, approach the priest and deacon to offer them peace.
- Line-up to receive Holy Communion.
- Pray clearly and distinctly the “Lamb of God” and say in truth, “Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”
- **When you are presented the Host with the words, “The Body of Christ,” you are to respond audibly, clearly, and distinctly, “Amen.” When you are presented the cup with the words, “The Blood of Christ,” you are to respond audibly, clearly, and distinctly, “Amen.”**
- After having received Holy Communion or demurred from doing Altar Servers with no responsibility for assisting to clear the altar are to return to their seats – by going around behind the altar (not crossing the sanctuary in front of it) **and remain standing facing the altar until the remaining hosts are put in the tabernacle. At that point, genuflect along with the priest and deacon, and then sit down.**
- After having received Holy Communion or demurred from doing so, Altar Servers assisting the priest with clearing the altar are to **return all items given them to the credence table.** After Mass Altar Servers are to take everything from the credence table to the sacristy for cleaning by Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. **(These Altar Servers are also to genuflect along with the priest and deacon when remaining hosts are put in the tabernacle.)**

These assisting Altar Servers are to return to their seats when the altar is cleared. They, too, are to go around behind the altar and are not to walk the sanctuary in front of the altar.

- After a communion song and/or a period of silence for private prayer, the priest will stand. The Altar Server who is serving as the Book Bearer is to approach the priest immediately. The priest will say, “Let us pray.” That of course is the Altar Server’s cue, but the best Altar Servers will have anticipated the priest’s need for the Roman Missal and will be already standing in front of the priest when he invites the people to pray. After the Communion Prayer (unless the Roman Missal will be needed for the blessing), the Altar Server assisting is to return the book to its place and to take his or her place.

11. The Concluding Rites

(90.) The concluding rites consist of

- a. Brief announcements, if they are necessary;
- b. The priest’s greeting and blessing, which on certain days and occasions is enriched and expressed in the prayer over the People or another more solemn formula;
- c. The dismissal of the people by the deacon or the priest, so that each may go out to do good works, praising and blessing God;
- d. The kissing of the altar by the priest and the deacon, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers.

(From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal)

- Make the “Sign of the Cross” when the priest blesses everyone, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Respond clearly and distinctly, “Amen.”
- Join in singing the closing hymn.
- When the priest begins to move from the presider’s chair, the Altar Servers are to pick-up the crucifix/cross and any candles used in the procession. All Altar Servers are to take their places in the center of the sanctuary in front of the altar. **The Cross Bearer and any Candle Bearers are to line up together as usual, but they are to stand – not close to the altar steps – instead at a great distance from the altar. Any Altar Server who has nothing in his or her hands is to stand immediately in front of the Cross and Candle Bearers; this Altar Server is to stand with hands folded.**
- The priest will reverence the altar with a kiss and then come around to the altar’s front (where behind him will be – in order – the lay readers, the Altar Server with folded hands, and then the Cross and Candle Bearers). The priest, deacon, lay readers, and the Altar Server with folded hands all do a “profound bow” before the altar of sacrifice. **THE CROSS BEARER AND THE CANDLE BEARERS ARE NOT TO BOW AT ALL.** After the bow, the Cross Bearer and Candle Bearers (as well as everyone else in the sanctuary) are to turn and process out of the church.
- During the procession out the Crucifix/Cross Bearer goes first (unless, of course, there is a Thurifer present) followed by the Candle Bearers. Again, the Candle Bearers are to walk side-by-side and two (2) or three

(3) pew-lengths behind the one in front of them. Candle Bearers are to keep the candles at the same height. Everyone is to walk comfortably, calmly, and reverently to the back of the church. Do not hurry or rush out; stay dignified. Nonetheless, do not walk as slowly as we did when we processed in at the start of Mass.

12. After/Following the Close of the Liturgy

- The Altar Server is to extinguish the candles with a taper.
- The Altar Server is to remove every item from the credence table and take each one to the sacristy for cleaning or exchanging by the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
- The Altar Server is to ask the adults whether he or she may help in cleaning, preparing for the next Mass, or returning items to storage if not needed further.
- The Altar Server is not to disrobe until he or she has determined that all of his or her duties have been fully discharged.
- The Altar Server is to put his or her alb back on the hangar from which it was removed, securing the Velcro strips. Please be sure to put the alb back in its proper place according to its size.
- Do not be loud or rambunctious in the sacristy.

APPENDIX A

The Roman Catholic Church Requires the Faithful **To Exhibit Uniformity In Their Gestures At Mass**

(42.) The gestures and posture of the priest, the deacon, and the ministers, as well as those of the people, ought to contribute to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, so that the true and full meaning of the different parts of the celebration is evident and that the participation of all is fostered. Therefore, **attention should be paid** to what is determined by this General Instruction and the traditional practice of the Roman Rite and **to what serves the common spiritual good of the People of God, rather than private inclination or arbitrary choice.**

A common posture, to be observed by all participants, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered for the sacred Liturgy: it both expresses and fosters the intention and spiritual attitude of the participants.

(95.) In the celebration of Mass the faithful form a holy people, a people whom God has made his own, a royal priesthood, so that they may give thanks to God and offer the spotless Victim not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, and so that they may learn to offer themselves. They should, moreover, endeavor to make this clear by their deep religious sense and their

charity toward brothers and sisters who participate with them in the same celebration.

Thus, **they [i.e. the faithful] are to shun any appearance of individualism or division**, keeping before their eyes that they have only one Father in heaven and accordingly are all brothers and sisters to each other.

(96.) Indeed, they form one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or by joining in the prayers and the singing, or above all by the common offering of Sacrifice and by a common partaking at the Lord's table. This **unity is beautifully apparent from the gestures and postures observed in common by the faithful.**

(From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal)

APPENDIX B

Glossary

Alb ... (1) The formal, white vestment worn by the Altar Server at St. Michael the Archangel Parish; (2) The formal, white under-vestment worn by the priest and deacon at Mass. The alb symbolizes the life in Christ enjoyed by the baptized.

Altar ... The table of sacrifice. The altar is more important than the tabernacle at Mass.

Ambo ... The stand from which the word of God is proclaimed. Heard from the ambo are the day's Bible readings: namely, its first and second readings, its psalm, the day's Gospel, and the homily.

Ambry ... The cabinet or wall box in which a parish's Holy Oils are kept. There are three (3) Holy Oils that are used for three, separate, specific purposes; they are the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of the Infirm (or Sick), and the Oil of Chrism.

Aspergill ... The tool used to sprinkle Holy Water.

Boat ... The small, fancy container that holds unused incense. With this item is a small, matching spoon used to scoop incense out and into the thurible.

Book of the Gospels ... The book that contains all of the Gospel readings used at Sunday Masses and at Holy Days of Obligation. The only parts of the Bible in this book are parts from *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*. This book has a highly decorated cover and is either carried in procession by a deacon at the start of Mass or has already been "enthroned" on the altar before the procession begins.

Cassock ... The long, black garment worn by popes, other bishops, monsignors, other priests, and seminarians. Wearing a cassock is entirely optional.

Chalice ... The cup into which the priest or deacon pours wine and water at Mass, the contents which then become the Blood of Christ at the consecration. Since this cup holds the Blood of Christ, it has to be made of precious metals; the outside of it may be made either of gold or silver, but the inside of the cup has to be made of gold.

Chasuble ... The formal, outer vestment worn by the priest to celebrate Mass. The color of the chasuble is determined by the liturgical season and day. Chasubles come in variations of white, gold, purple, red, rose, and green.

Ciborium ... The large vessel into which remaining Consecrated Hosts are put and covered after Holy Communion has been distributed to the faithful. This sacred vessel is then put in the tabernacle.

Cincture ... The rope or cord used to belt the alb worn by the Altar Server, deacon, and priest.

Communion Cup ... The cup or cups used by priests, deacons, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to distribute the Blood of Christ at Mass. They are to be made of precious metals and the inside of the cups lined with gold.

Communion Plate ... The plate(s) or bowl(s) used by priests, deacons, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to distribute the Body of Christ at Mass. They are to be made of precious metals and the inside of them lined with gold.

Corporal ... The white linen cloth embossed with a red cross which is to be unfolded on the altar and on which is placed the bread and the wine to be consecrated. It is there for the purpose of capturing any crumbs or drippings from the Body and Blood of Christ that might fall there. There is a proper procedure for folding this square cloth in order to keep particles within it. The corporal may be understood as symbolic of the burial cloth in which our Lord was wrapped after death.

Credence Table ... The simple piece of furniture off to one side of the sanctuary on which vessels, cloths, and water used at Mass are gathered both before and after their use at the altar.

Cruet ... The small glass vessel which holds water or wine for use at Mass. They come in matched pairs; one set of two is needed for Mass.

Dalmatic ... The formal, outer vestment worn by the deacon at Mass. The color of the dalmatic to be worn is determined by the liturgical season and day.

Finger Towel ... The small, white linen used by the priest to dry his hands at Mass after the ritual purification at the altar.

Gathering Area ... An open space outside the church proper. The entry space at the front (i.e. High Street side) of St. Michael the Archangel is also known as the “vestibule.” The larger, and more often used, gathering space at St. Michael the Archangel is Marian Hall.

Gifts Table ... The piece of furniture at the back of the church on which the bread and wine (i.e. the symbolic “first fruits”) are kept to be brought to the priest in procession by selected members of the congregation at the Offertory.

Holy Water Bucket ... The metal, antique-looking container used to hold and transport Holy Water.

Incense ... The mixture of leaves, bark, spices, and other natural materials which, when burned, produces a sweet-smelling smoke. The rising scent symbolizes our sanctification and the perfecting of our prayers ascending to God.

Lavabo ... The bowl into which water runs when the Altar Server pours it over the hands of the priest at the altar for the priest’s ritual purification. In this handbook it has been referred to as the “finger bowl.”

Lectern ... The stand to the side of the sanctuary in most churches from which announcements are typically made and from which a cantor introduces hymns to be sung. St. Michael the Archangel does not have a lectern.

Lectionary ... The book that contains all the readings used at Sunday, daily, and Holy Day of Obligation Masses. This book includes all the “first readings,” all the “second readings,” all the psalms, all the Gospel readings. It is commonly left at the ambo.

Paten ... The small saucer or plate on which rests the host that the priest elevates at the consecration and that he fractures into pieces at the “Lamb of God.” This plate is surfaced in gold.

Paschal Candle ... The tall candle that is also called the “Easter Candle.” A parish buys a new one every year and places symbolic markings on it at the Easter Vigil Mass. The Paschal Candle is lit at specified liturgical times (e.g. in Easter time) and for particular liturgical rites (e.g. the Sacrament of Baptism and the Rite of Christian Burial/Funeral). The Paschal Candle represents Christ, the Light that has come into the world in the person of Jesus.

Presider’s Chair ... The priest’s chair in the sanctuary.

ProceSSIONAL Cross ... The crucifix or cross mounted at the top of a tall pole that is carried by an Altar Server at the head of the procession into and out of the church at the beginning and the closing of Mass.

Purificator ... The larger white linen cloth the priest, deacon, and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion use to wipe the rims and insides of the chalice and communion cups.

Roman Missal ... The big, red book containing the prayers that the priest says at Mass. This is the book that an Altar Server brings to the priest at the presider’s chair twice each Mass, and the book that an Altar Server puts on the altar when preparing the altar for sacrifice. At St. Michael the Archangel we actually use two

(2) copies of the Roman Missal at Mass: a smaller edition for use at the presider's chair and a larger edition for use at the altar.

Sacristy ... The room where one prepares for Mass, vesting and praying. Sacred vessels, various liturgical books, and other religious items are kept in the sacristy.

Sanctuary ... The sacred space on which the congregation's attention is focused. The altar and the ambo, places where Christ acts in a special way, are in the sanctuary. The sanctuary is where the priest, deacon, Altar Servers, readers, and cantor sit during Mass. The tabernacle is also in the sanctuary.

Sepulcrum ... The cavity in the altar in which the relic or relics of parish patron saints are encased.

Stock ... The three (3) containers that hold the three (3) Holy Oils. In most parishes these are stored in the ambry. At St. Michael the Archangel the stock is kept in the safe found in the sacristy.

Stole ... The formal, long, narrow band of cloth worn by the priest and deacon under their respective outer vestments (i.e. under the chasuble and the dalmatic) at Mass. This accessory matches the color of the chasuble and dalmatic to be worn. The priest's stole drapes across/over the priest's shoulders and hangs down in front; the deacon's stole drapes across/over the deacon's right shoulder, crosses his chest, and hangs against his left side. The stole is a sign of office in the Church.

Stoup ... The "technical" name for the Holy Water fountains at entrances to the church.

Surplice ... The formal, white, wide-sleeved garment worn by Altar Servers, Masters of Ceremonies, deacons, and/or priests over the cassock during certain liturgical functions, in some places, and at particular times. In some parishes Altar Servers wear cassocks and surpluses at Mass; at St. Michael the Archangel Altar Servers wear albs and cinctures.

Tabernacle ... The gold-plated box behind the altar of sacrifice and inset at the high altar in which unused Consecrated Hosts are kept until needed. This box is kept locked. A candle encased in a red votive vase must remain lit at all times near the tabernacle to point-up the presence of the Body of Christ in it. The tabernacle recalls to mind the Israelites' Ark of the Covenant in which the Ten Commandments were kept and upon which God was said to sit.

Taper ... The long, metallic instrument used to light and to extinguish candles. This tool, like a hammer, has two parts or sides to it. One part has a long, thin wax wick in it which the Altar Server lights and then holds to a candle; the other part has a bell-shaped or cup-shaped piece for putting over a lit candle in order to snuff it out.

Thurible ... The elaborate metal container in which incense is burned on hot pieces of charcoal. The container has a long chain attached to it. A deacon or priest swings the container by the chain, spreading sweet-smelling smoke over the altar, the Book of the Gospels, the gifts of bread and wine, and the People of God assembled.

APPENDIX C

Post-Liturgical Sacristy Prayer Formula

It had been the norm in days gone by for the priest and the Altar Servers to say a petitionary prayer in the sacristy when they had returned there after Mass. The prayer is only two (2) lines long: one (1) line said by the priest and one (1) line of response by the Altar Servers. If said in Latin, the priest will begin by saying simply, “*Prosit.*” Then the Altar Servers should respond, “*Omnibus et singulis.*” The pronunciation for the Altar Servers’ response is “ōm-knee-bus ět sing-goo-lease.” If said in English, the priest will begin by saying, “**May it be profitable to our souls.**” Then the Altar Servers are to respond, “**May it be profitable for each and everyone.**”

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