

Instructions for Altar Servers
Simple Form of Mass for Sundays and School Masses
St. Joseph – Westphalia, MO
Last revised October, 2022

A. General Rules.

1. When standing or walking while not carrying anything, keep your hands folded at your chest with fingers extended upward at forty-five degree angle.¹
2. When seated, sit still and do not slouch or cross your legs.
3. *Before and after Mass*, when crossing the center of the sanctuary, genuflect to the tabernacle, unless carrying something.²

During Mass, once in the sanctuary, bow to the altar when crossing the center of the sanctuary.³
4. When two servers move together, they should remain side by side if possible.
For example, when bringing the wine and water to the side of the altar, two servers approach the altar together and leave the altar together.

B. Before Mass.

1. Dress in appropriate server attire – a proper length cassock (down to top of shoes) and surplice. If you have an even size cassock, wear that same size surplice. If you wear an odd size cassock wear the next size larger surplice. The crucifix necklace is put on last.
2. Light the candles after you have dressed. The candles to light are the 6 on the high altar and the 6 on the main altar.
3. Check to make sure that charcoal has been lit for incense.
4. Take the water, wine, and bread to the offertory table at the church entrance.
5. When all servers are ready, go to the statue of Jesus, light the votive candle and say the server's prayer together.
6. At 5 minutes before Mass begins, **server 3** takes the processional cross. **Servers 1 and 2** take the processional candles and go to the church entrance.
7. At the church entrance, **servers 1 & 2** light the processional candles.

1 Ceremonial of Bishops, no. 107.

2 General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM], no. 274; Ceremonial of Bishops, no. 71.

3 GIRM, no. 274.

C. The Entrance Procession.

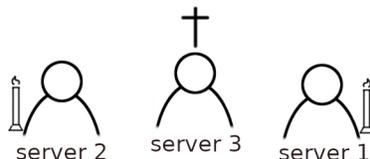
1. In the entrance procession, the servers holding the candles walk together with the cross between them.⁴

Server 1 is on the right.

Server 2 is on the left.

Server 3 carries the cross between the candles.

With three servers (1 cross, 2 candles):



With two servers (1 cross):



2. Upon reaching the sanctuary:
*If you are holding something, bow your head slightly and enter immediately.*⁵
*If you are not holding something, genuflect and enter immediately.*⁶
Do not wait for the priest or deacon.
3. **Server 3** puts the cross on the stand in the sacristy and goes to his/her place
Servers 1 & 2 put the candles on the corners of the middle step leading up to the high altar.⁷
Servers not holding anything go to their places.
4. **Server 3's** place is the second chair on the sacristy side.
Server 1's place is the first chair on the sacristy side.
Server 2's place is the chair by the credence table on the priest's side.

⁴ GIRM, no. 120; Ceremonial of Bishops, no. 128.

⁵ GIRM, no. 274.

⁶ GIRM, no. 274.

⁷ GIRM, no. 122.

D. The Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word.

1. When the priest says, “Let us pray,” **server 2** takes the Roman Missal carefully and, holding it from the bottom, right side up against his/her chest, brings it to the priest. Once the priest has prayed the collect prayer, this server closes the book and returns it to the stand, laying the book carefully with its spine down.
2. Servers sing and say the prayers together with the congregation (e.g., the responses, the Gloria, the Creed).

E. The Liturgy of the Eucharist.

1. When the congregation sits after the petitions, **server 2** takes the Roman Missal with its stand to the altar, placing it on the left side of the altar at a 45-degree angle toward the center. If necessary, **server 2** may take the stand first and then make a second trip to carry the book.
2. **Server 1** brings the chalice from the credence table to the altar. The chalice is set on the right side of the altar, with the veiled part facing the congregation.
3. *If there is a deacon*, the deacon removes the corporal from the burse and unveils the chalice. **Server 1** then waits to receive the burse and veil and then takes them back to the credence table.

If there is not a deacon, **server 1**: First, removes the corporal from the burse and sets the folded corporal at the center of the altar with the burse on top of it. Second, carefully removes the chalice veil and folds it on top of the burse. Third, sets the burse with the folded veil on top to the right. Fourth, unfolds the corporal at the center of the altar. The red cross of the corporal should be in the center at the edge of the altar facing the tabernacle. Finally, **server 1** takes the burse with folded veil on top back to the credence table.

4. If an additional ciborium (for example, for the choir loft) is on the credence table, **server 2** brings it to the altar.

The altar fully set:



5. When the priest goes to receive the bread, wine, and water that are brought forward, **servers 1 & 2** go with him.

The wine and water are taken to the credence table.

If the stoppers are in the water and wine cruets, they are removed and set on the credence table.

If there is a collection basket, it is placed near the ambo.

The collection basket is never placed near the altar.⁸

Server 3 goes to the sacristy and gets the thurible with its incense boat.

6. **Server 1** brings the wine cruet and **server 2** brings the water cruet to the right side of the altar. They stand side by side, facing the altar, with the wine nearest the altar. Cruets are held by the bottom and handed to the priest (or deacon) with the handles toward him.
7. After the priest (or deacon) puts wine and water into the chalice, **servers 1 & 2** return to the credence table and prepare to wash the priest's hands.
8. After the priest has offered the chalice and prayed, bowing at the center of the altar, **server 3** brings the thurible and incense boat to him.

When bringing the thurible and incense boat, **server 3** walks to the left edge of the altar, then turns ninety degrees and comes directly to the priest at the center of the altar.

When the priest (or deacon) takes the incense boat, **server 3** opens the thurible and holds it open until the priest has blessed the incense.

The priest (or deacon) takes the thurible and returns the incense boat to **server 3**.

Server 3 immediately returns the incense boat to the sacristy and then waits near the altar on the pulpit side.

9. The priest incenses the gifts, the altar, and the cross while passing in front of it.

Following the incensation of the altar,

If there is a deacon, the priest hands the thurible to the deacon. The deacon incenses the priest, then the congregation, and returns the thurible to **server 3**.

If there is no deacon, the **server 3** bows to the priest, incenses the priest with three double-swings, and bows to the priest again.⁹ Then **server 3** goes down toward the congregation, in the middle of the communion rail, bows to the congregation, incenses the congregation with three double-swings, and bows to the congregation again.

After the incensation of the congregation, **server 3** returns the thurible and incense boat to the sacristy.

10. After the *Holy, Holy, Holy*, **all servers** go down to the steps in front of the altar to kneel.
Server 1 kneels on the left.
Server 2 kneels on the right, next to the bells.
Server 3 kneels in the middle.

⁸ GIRM, no. 73.

⁹ Order of Mass, no. 27; GIRM, no. 144; Ceremonial of Bishops, no. 92.

11. During the Eucharistic Prayer, **server 2** rings the bells as follows:¹⁰
- 1 quick ring when the chalice is uncovered, the deacon kneels, and the priest places his hands in a triangular fashion over the host and chalice;
- 3 quick rings when the priest elevates the Host;
- 3 quick rings when the priest elevates the chalice.
12. Servers stand and kneel when the congregation does.
- Following the *Lamb of God*, they remain kneeling in front of the altar until after receiving Holy Communion.
- After receiving Holy Communion, **all servers** stand and then leave together. **Server 3** goes to his or her place.
13. **Servers 1 & 2** take the Communion patens from the credence table.¹¹
- The Communion patens are always held right-side up, parallel to the floor.
- When the priest and deacon (or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion) distribute the Hosts, **servers 1 & 2** move with them.
- Each carefully holds the paten under where the Host is so that if a Host or some piece of it falls, it will be caught.
14. After the distribution of Communion, **servers 1 and 2** place the Communion patens on the altar, careful to lay them face up. **Server 1** returns to his or her place.
- The priest or deacon may instead take the paten directly from the server.*
- Server 2** takes the Roman Missal with its stand from the altar back to the stand on the side.
15. **Server 2** takes the Communion patens from the side of the altar to the credence table after they have been purified.
- If there is a deacon, he takes the vessels to the credence table and purifies them there.¹²*
- If there is not a deacon, the priest purifies the vessels at the altar.¹³*
- In this case, **server 2** brings the cruet of water (handle out) to the priest at the center of the altar and then returns the cruet to the credence table.

10 GIRM, no. 150.

11 GIRM, no. 118; Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2014), no. 93.

12 GIRM, no. 183.

13 GIRM, no. 163.

Server 2 then takes any vessels (for example, a ciborium) to the credence table once the priest has purified them and set them to the side.

When the priest has returned to his chair, **server 2** rebuilds the chalice: chalice, purificator, small paten, pall, chalice veil, and burse with folded corporal inside.

Server 2 then takes the rebuilt chalice to the credence table.

16. When the priest says, “Let us pray,” **server 2** brings the Roman Missal to the priest just as at the beginning of Mass, closes it when the prayer is finished (unless there is a solemn blessing), and lays it spine-down on the book stand.

E. The Concluding Rites and Procession out of the Church.

1. After the dismissal by the priest (or deacon) and the St. Michael prayer, **server 3** gets the cross and **servers 1 & 2** get their candles.

All servers exit the sanctuary.

If there are three servers (1 cross, 2 candles): the servers stand in a line of three (cross in the middle between the two candles), even with the first pew, facing toward the tabernacle.

If there are two servers (1 cross): server 3 stands even with the first pew, facing toward the tabernacle. The other server stands in the center between the cross bearer and the priest, facing toward the tabernacle.

2. When the priest genuflects,
If you are holding something, bow your head slightly and turn.
If you are not holding something, genuflect and turn.
3. The procession out of the church is in the same order as the entrance.
4. Upon reaching the church entrance, **server 3** turns and faces toward the tabernacle.

The priest and others who are not holding something bow to the cross.¹⁴

The priest says: *Prosit* (“May this Mass be for the good ...”). The response is: *Omnibus et singulis* (“... of each and every one of us”).

¹⁴ Ceremonial of Bishops, no. 170.