

Sunday Mass Altar Serving

@ St. Dominic's

**Google Doc
Last Updated: 24 July 2018**

Altar Serving in General

When to show up?

- 15 minutes before Mass (30 minutes before big Masses)

Dress

- Dress shoes and at least business casual attire

Albs

- It should reach your ankles. The cincture will also pull it up.

Posture / Pace

- Standing / Walking: hands joined (when not holding anything)
- When holding something with one hand, use the right hand and place left hand on heart
- Procession pace: moderately slow (look behind you to check)

Setup & Cleanup

- For Setup: See *Setup* section in this binder.
- If Head Usher does not check in, make sure 4 metal collection baskets and 1 wicker collection basket get to the back of church. If there's a second collection, include a second wicker basket.
- Clean Up: return everything to sacristy and extinguish candles.

Roles

The following are different roles for altar servers:

- Thurifer (incense)
- Crucifer (Cross Bearer)
- Book Bearer
- Candle Bearers (2)
- Torch Bearers (6: only on special occasions, with processions)
- Acolytes (ideally 2)
- Crosier & Miter Bearers (for a Bishop)
- Bell Ringer
- Master of Ceremony (one or more)

Ideally, there are enough servers for each to serve only one role. Without enough servers for each role, doubling or tripling up is necessary.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Only 1 server:

Crucifer + Book Bearer + Acolyte (no candles)

2 Servers:

1. Crucifer + Acolyte + Candle Bearer for Gospel Procession
2. Book Bearer + Acolyte + Candle Bearer for Gospel Procession

3 Servers:

1. Crucifer + Book Bearer + Bell Ringer
2. Candle Bearer 1 + Acolyte 1
3. Candle Bearer 2 + Acolyte 2

4 Servers:

OR:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Crucifer2. Book Bearer3. Candle Bearer 1 + Acolyte 14. Candle Bearer 2 + Acolyte 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Thurifer2. Crucifer & Book Bearer3. Candle Bearer 1 + Acolyte 14. Candle Bearer 2 + Acolyte 2
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5 Servers:

OR:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Crucifer + Book Bearer2. Candle Bearer 13. Candle Bearer 24. Acolyte 15. Acolyte 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Thurifer2. Crucifer3. Book Bearer4. Candle Bearer 1 + Acolyte 15. Candle Bearer 2 + Acolyte 2
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6 Servers:

7 Servers:

8 Servers:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Thurifer2. Crucifer + Book3. Candle Bearer 14. Candle Bearer 25. Acolyte 16. Acolyte 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Thurifer2. Crucifer3. Book Bearer4. Candle Bearer 15. Candle Bearer 26. Acolyte 17. Acolyte 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Thurifer2. Book Bearer3. Crucifer4. Book Bearer5. Candle Bearer 16. Candle Bearer 27. Acolyte 18. Acolyte 2
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Crucifer

Entrance Procession:

- Lead procession in and out (unless there is a separate Thurifer, in which case the Thurifer would lead). Bow before where the Dominican Shield is on the floor in front of the Altar, and go to your place.
- Hold Cross high.
- Corpus faces Celebrant (Dominican tradition).
- The Cross is stored behind the pillar on Chair Side of the Sanctuary.
- Seat: 2nd Choir Stall on Chair Side (unless concelebrants are there, in which case you should set up a separate chair for yourself)

Offertory:

- At offertory, lead up the Gift Bearers with the Cross: Pick up the Cross, go down a side aisle, and across the break to the Gift Table. When the Gift Bearers are ready and the Celebrant begins to make his way to the lower sanctuary, lead the Gift Bearers up. Give a head bow at the entrance to the Sanctuary. Return the Cross to its place. Make your way to the other side of the sanctuary (Ambo side) by going behind the Tabernacle & Reredos, so that you can ring the bell and receive Holy Communion on that side.

Bell Rings:

- Ring the hand bell:
 - 1 ring for Epiclesis (right before the Consecration, when the priest holds his hands flat over the gifts)
 - 3 rings for each Elevation

Recession:

- After the Dismissal retrieve the Cross and go to the lower level of the sanctuary. Face the altar. Give a head bow when Celebrant genuflects, then turn and process out. Make sure that the Corpus is facing the Celebrant.

Nota Bene:

- For normal Masses, use the wooden Cross
- For special Masses, use the metal Cross.

Book/Missal Bearer

Entrance Procession:

- Walk behind Crucifer in procession, carrying nothing.

Collect:

- Hold the Missal for Celebrant for Collect (and anything else he needs it for at the beginning of Mass)

Offertory:

- Set up Missal & Stand at the Altar at the beginning of the Offertory (right after the Intercessions). See the ***Sunday Mass Altar Setup Guide*** in this binder for details.
- Go to sit on Ambo Side of Sanctuary (to receive Communion with other servers there)

Holy Communion:

- Take the Missal from the Altar during Communion & returns to Chair Side

Prayer After Communion:

- Hold the Missal for Celebrant for Prayer after Communion (and perhaps for three-fold solemn blessing at end of Mass)

Nota Bene:

- Ideally, hold the Missal for the Celebrant at the chair in such a way that isn't blocking the Celebrant from the Congregation
- When there is a Deacon, the Deacon will assist in opening the Missal to the right place
- Sometimes the Celebrant will need you to hold the Missal or a Binder at other times
- After the Dismissal join the Crucifer and other servers on the lower level of the sanctuary. Stand in front of the Crucifer and face the Altar. Genuflect when the Celebrant does. Then turn and follow Cross and Candles out.

Candle Bearers

Entrance Procession:

- Process in and out with Cross Bearer (alongside, not behind)
- Upon reaching the Sanctuary, the Candle Bearers should move to the sides of the Sanctuary Entrance (remaining at the floor level), facing each other and letting everyone go through them.
- After everyone is through, go to the shield on the floor of the upper sanctuary, give a head bow, move right, stow candles behind pillar on Chair Side, and sit in the open choir stalls on the Chair Side, or on separate chairs if those are full.

Gospel Procession:

- Go to the Tabernacle Side of Altar at each corner, facing the Congregation (following the Thurifer if there is incense). After the Deacon/ Celebrant picks up the Gospel Book, the Candle Bearer on the Chair side should go behind the Deacon/ Celebrant and join the other Candle Bearer. They walk together, go to both sides of the Ambo, take one step down, and face each other. After the Gospel is finished, they go to stow their candles behind the pillar on Ambo Side and sit in open choir stalls on Ambo Side, or in other chairs designated for them.

Eucharistic Prayer:

- On special Masses when there is a Thurifer, go down to kneel at the Altar Rail with the Thurifer for the Eucharistic Prayer: At the beginning of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), make your way down the side stairs in front of St. Joseph with the Thurifer. The order should be: Candle Bearer, Thurifer, Candle Bearer. The Candle Bearers kneel with everyone at the end of the Sanctus and put their candles on the Altar rail (equidistant on both sides, right past the beginning of the Altar Rail). After the Great Amen at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, when everyone else stands, they go back the same way they came and stow their candles back behind the pillar on the Ambo side. Note: If you have trouble kneeling on the marble, set up two cushioned kneelers at the Altar Rail before Mass.

Recession:

- After the Dismissal, retrieve the candles, take your place alongside the Crucifer in the lower Sanctuary, face the Altar, give a head bow when the Celebrant genuflects in front of the Altar, turn around, and process out alongside the Crucifer.

Nota Bene:

Candles should be held with inside hand grabbing the bottom of the candlestick and the outside hand right below the central node of the candlestick.

Acolytes at the Altar (Offertory)

1st Trip from Credence Table to Altar:

- Set up Altar at Offertory (bring up Chalices, unfold Corporals, bring up Microphone, etc.). If there is a Deacon, he will do the set up. Simply bring up Chalices, etc. See *Sunday Mass Altar Setup Guide*.

Receiving the Gifts:

- When the Celebrant goes to the entrance of the sanctuary to receive the gifts, the acolytes should go with him to help receive the wine (to the right of the Celebrant) and collection basket (to the left of the Celebrant).
- **Note:** If there is a Deacon and only one Acolyte, the Acolyte stands to the left of the Celebrant and receives the collection basket from him. If there is a Deacon and two Acolytes, Acolyte 2 receives the collection basket at the left of the Celebrant. Acolyte 1 stands to the right of the Deacon. Acolyte 1 receives the wine, while the Deacon receives the Paten of Hosts from the Celebrant, who will then hand the Paten back to him at the Altar. If an Acolyte receives the wine, he should go first to the Credence Table to take off the cap and leave it there.

2nd Trip from Credence Table to Altar:

- Acolyte 1 brings the wine and is closest to the Altar, while Acolyte 2 brings the water and stands next to Acolyte 1. Cruets should have caps off and handles facing the celebrant. Give the cruet to the celebrant with the right hand and receive it back with the left hand. The unused hand should be over the heart.

- **Note:** If there is a Deacon and only one Acolyte, the Deacon will take the wine to the Altar. After stowing the collection basket, the acolyte goes the Credence table to get the water cruet. He takes off the cap and leaves it there. He then proceeds up to the Altar with Water Cruet. He returns with both Cruets and the cap to the Wine Cruet.

3rd Trip from Credence Table to Altar:

- Acolyte 1 brings up the water and bowl, while Acolyte 2 brings up the finger towel. Acolyte 1 pours water over hands of the Celebrant.
- **Note 1:** If there is a Deacon, he will likely assist with the towel.
- **Note 2:** If incense is used, this 3rd trip takes place after the Celebrant has incensed the Altar and immediately after the Thurifer (or Deacon) takes the Thurible from the Celebrant in order to incense Concelebrants or the Congregation.

Communion:

- After the Celebrant and EMHCs go down to distribute Holy Communion, the Acolytes and Book Bearer clear everything except the Altar Cross off the altar. If there is a Pyx on the Altar, leave that on a Corporal on the Altar. See the *Corporal Guide* for the correct way to fold and handle any Corporals.

Recessional:

- After the Dismissal the Acolytes join the Crucifer and Candle Bearers on the lower level of the sanctuary. Stand between them and the Altar and face the Altar. Genuflect when the Celebrant does. Then turn and follow Cross and Candles out.

Thurifer

Setup & Things to Note

Lighting Coals

- Light one coal 10 minutes before Mass
- Light and add another coal during the Homily

Seating & Setup

- Set up Stand behind the pillar near St. Joseph
- Set up extra chair for yourself next to it.

When You Incense

- At Offertory:
 - Bow before and after incensing someone.
 - Three sets of twos for everyone.
- During the Eucharistic Prayer: Three sets of threes for each Consecration.

Possible Incensation Times (Check with Celebrant)

1. ***Beginning:*** At the Altar after the Entrance Procession (after Celebrant kisses the Altar)

2. ***Gospel:*** Get ready during the 2nd Reading. Unless there is a Sequence after the 2nd Reading (rare), make your way to the Celebrant Chair immediately after the 2nd Reading is finished (do not bow in the middle as you cross the sanctuary). After the Incense has been imposed, go to the Tabernacle side of the Altar and stand to the right of the Candle Bearer on the Ambo Side. Once the Deacon/Celebrant picks up the Gospel Book, lead the Procession over to the Ambo. Station yourself toward the right side of the Ambo at the corner of the pillar, letting both Candle Bearers go in front of you. The Celebrant will take the Thurible from you after introducing the Gospel and will return it to you afterward. After the proclamation of the Gospel, simply go back to hang the Thurible on its stand, and return to your seat.

3. ***Offertory:*** After the offering of the wine and before the washing of the hands, approach the Altar. After the Celebrant goes around the Altar, take the Thurible from him, incense him, then any Concelebrants, then the Congregation.

4. ***Eucharistic Prayer:*** Go down with the Candle Bearers at the beginning of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy). Make your way with them down the side stairs in front of St. Joseph with the incense and candles. You will kneel on the Sanctuary entrance step with everyone at the end of the Sanctus, while the Candle Bearers kneel at both sides of the Altar Rail. Incense both Consecrations with “three threes,” with a slight pause between each set of three. After the Great Amen at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, when everyone else stands, you and the Candle Bearers will go back the same way you all came.

Recessional

After the Dismissal the Thurifer retrieves Thurible and joins the Crucifer and Candle Bearers on the lower level of the sanctuary. Stand between them and the people and face the altar. Give a Head Bow when the Celebrant genuflects. Then turn and lead Cross and Candles out.

Reception of Holy Communion

- All servers should line up:
 - in a single file
 - on the Ambo Side of the Altar
 - to the Right of the EMHC's.
- Allow the EMHC's to receive first.
- If there are EMHC's, receive the Precious Blood from them. If not, you can wait for a priest to bring you the Precious Blood.