

St. John Vianney Altar Server Play Book

February 3, 2008

A NOTE from Fr. John:

Once the schedules are complete and finalized, and the Altar Server list placed on the website, each Altar Server will be expected to fulfill his or her commitment. It is your responsibility to get a replacement. After failure to arrange a back-up 3 times, you will be subject to removal from the serving schedule.

Revision History

January 11, 2008 – Precious Blood Cups After Communion

January 27, 2008 – Carrying the Cross with Respect

February 3, 2008 – Procession to the Front of the Sanctuary After Mass

General Comments

Altar serving is a PRIVILEGE. It is a service to God and our Pastor. It must be performed with extreme reverence, care and joy.

It is our intention to have a minimum of four (4) servers, and as many as six (6) servers, at all Masses. If you are not scheduled and are present at a Mass with fewer than four (4) servers on the Altar, we NEED you to dress, come forward, and serve. If there are fewer than four (4) servers at any Mass and others do not come forward, those present will need to perform more than one duty while on the Altar. For example, the RC may need to also assist the Crucifer during the preparation of the Altar.

All Altar Servers MUST be present 15 minutes before each Mass. The first Altar Server dressed should light the Altar candles.

Dress

For Saturday evening and Sunday Masses, boys must wear dark pants, dark shoes and dark socks. The girls must wear dark shoes. Absolutely no sandals or flip flops. As an Altar Server, even if you are not serving, please come properly dressed in case you are needed to serve.

Posture

If you are standing and not holding anything, your hands must be in front of your chest, in the prayer position, i.e., hands together, fingers extended. If you are holding something with one hand only, e.g., a paten, the other hand must be on your heart.

Bowing to Father or the Deacon is the method of communicating on the Altar. There will be minimal or no speaking in reverence for the Mass. The proper way to bow is with a slight head and short waist movement. Do not over accentuate. Bow to the Tabernacle, if

the Priest is not on the Altar, and to the Priest if he is on the Altar. Remember that the Priest is Persona Christe (the person of Christ) when officiating Mass.

All Altar Servers will stand whenever one or more Altar Servers are performing their functions, in most cases. For example: during the preparation of the Altar; at the presentation of the candles during the Gospel; the bringing forward of the Gifts and at the Consecration (washing of the Priest's hands). Standing and sitting will be done in union and will be initiated by the Crucifer, so look to the Crucifer for a slight head nod before everyone stands or sits.

Carrying of the Cross

The Cross is considered by many to be our standard, e.g., we are asked to follow/carry the cross of Christ, we venerate the cross, and the cross, during the many crusades, led us into battle for the Faith during the Religious wars in France and Germany in the 17th century. As the standard, it must be treated with reverence and therefore held high in all cases (DO NOT bow the cross at any time).

Preparation before Mass

Fifteen (15) minutes before Mass begins, prepare the following items:

1. Place the Sacramentary on top of and between the 2 chair kneelers nearest the Tabernacle.
2. Light the candles on the Altar 10 minutes before Mass. Ensure there is a spare lighter on the left credence table for lighting the candles in case they are accidentally extinguished.
3. Make sure there is a water bottle in the side desk next to the President's Chair.
4. Candle Bearers should light their candles just before Mass starts.

Altar Server Actions during Mass

I. Entrance to 2nd Reading – Mass of the Catechumens

When Father gives the command for the Altar Servers to begin processing down the aisle, the Crucifer leads the procession down the center aisle to the Altar. All servers will proceed up the stairs of the Sanctuary. As you start up the stairs, LOOK to the Tabernacle as a form of reference, but DO NOT stop or pause to bow toward the Tabernacle. Place the crucifix and both candles in their proper places. The RC and LC proceed to the front of the Altar, bow, and return to their correct chairs and wait to be seated.

When Father says, “**Let us pray,**” the Book picks up the Sacramentary and moves to Father. The Sacramentary should be in the upright position when presenting to Father. When Father opens the Sacramentary, your hands should be on the bottom of each side of the Sacramentary. This provides balance and allows Father to turn pages as needed.

After the first prayer, and after Father directs the parishioners to be seated for the readings, the Book closes the Sacramentary (Father may close it for you), returns to the correct chair, places the Sacramentary on one of the chairs, and remains standing. The Crucifer gives a head nod and everyone should sit in unison for the readings.

II. Alleluia through Creed

After the 2nd reading is complete and the Minister of Lector has bowed to the Altar, all Altar Servers will stand (in unison) for the Alleluia prayer. At this time the LC and RC quickly, but smoothly, move to the front of the Altar, bow, and proceed to pick up their candles. Once the candles are in your hands, move to the opposite sides of the AMBO and face the reader of the Gospel. Put one hand just below the Gold part of the Candle at the top to help level and balance the candle. Hold the candle vertically (straight up and down) and level with the other Altar Server, if at all possible.

When the reading of the Gospel is complete and the parish community responds, “**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,**” both Candle servers will return the candles to their holders and proceed to their proper chairs. The RC moves behind the President’s chair in returning to his/her chair. Everyone remains standing until the RC is in position and the Crucifer gives a slight head nod. Then all sit in unison.

After the homily, the parishioners and the Altar Servers will stand for the Petition prayers and the Nicene Creed. During the following portion of the Creed, all Altar Servers will bow at the hips: “**By the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.**”

III. Offertory through Cleansing of Father’s Hands

When the communion song begins, all the Altar Servers will stand. The Book picks up the Sacramentary, moves to the Altar, places it on the Tabernacle side of the Altar in its proper position and returns to the proper chair. The proper position of the Book is slanted to the left, face up, and close to where the CORPORAL will be placed. After the Book has returned to the proper chair, the Crucifer will take the CHALICE to the Altar and prepare the Altar for the Mass of the Faithful.

The following actions are performed: First the corporal is unfolded on the Altar. It is important to note how the corporal is folded on top of the chalice. It is like a book. So remove it from the top of the Chalice and place it on the Altar in this exact position: to unfold it, the first flap is moved to the left like you open a book. Next the right flap is opened to the right, the top flap is opened toward the congregation, and the bottom flap is opened toward you. Adjust the corporal so that it is centered on the Altar and close to the edge where Father will be presiding. (As a separate note, the folds of the corporal will be toward the Altar and either the Cross or “IHS” will be positioned visibly, as is proper). The letters IHS on the corporal are an abbreviation of Jesus, the Greek name for Jesus.

Next the PALL is placed to the far left of the Altar, the PATEN is placed on top of the red cross or IHS on the corporal, the chalice is placed on the top right corner of the

corporal and the PURIFICATOR is placed to the right of the corporal. The POURING cloth will already be on the Altar, so while the Crucifer is preparing the Altar with the chalice, the LC brings the wine CUPS and purificators to the Altar. When the Altar is finally prepared, the Crucifer and LC return to their chairs and all Altar Servers then sit in unison.

When the offertory is ready to be brought to the Altar, everyone stands with Father. As Father begins to move to the front of the Sanctuary to accept the people's offering, the Book and RC should join Father in receiving the gifts. If the Deacon is present, then only the Right Candle will move to the front to help in receiving the gifts. In returning to the Altar without a Deacon present, both RC and Book should move to the right side of the Altar (the Tabernacle side) to present the wine and hosts to Father. When Father has taken the wine and hosts from the Altar Servers, the Book and RC bow in unison and return to their OPPOSITE chairs. They switch seats so the Book is able to ring the bells during the consecration.

When Father returns to the Altar and accepts the flagon of wine and ciboria from the RC and Book, the Crucifer (who is already standing) will extract the WATER CRUET from the CREDENCE TABLE and move to the Altar. Before Father takes the cruet, the Crucifer will bow. At the same time the Crucifer moves to the Altar with the cruet, the LC extracts the LAVABO and LAVABO TOWEL from the credence table and stands next to the Ambo.

The Crucifer will join the LC standing next to the Ambo until it is time to move to the Altar and wash Father's hands. When complete, both Altar Servers bow to Father, the Crucifer will pick up the empty FLAGON from the Altar or from the Deacon, replace the items on the credence table, and all return to their proper chairs.

IV. Epiclesis through Communion

When Father begins the prayer, "**Lord you are holy indeed...**" and after singing the song, "**Holy, Holy...**" everyone will kneel together. At the Epiclesis (when Father prays over our gifts, i.e., he extends his hands over the bread and wine), the Book will ring the bells once. Later, during the consecration, when Father elevates the Body of Christ, the Book rings the bells three times. When Father genuflects, each Altar Server will bow his/her head. When Father elevates the Blood of Christ, the Book rings the bells three times. Again, when Father genuflects, all Altar Servers will bow their heads.

In a short time Father will begin the prayer, "**Let us proclaim the mystery of faith...**" and later sings, "**Through him ... in the unity of the Holy Spirit...**" At this time, all Altar Servers will stand for the Our Father. When the Our Father is complete, the Crucifer (followed by the LC) and the Book (followed by the RC) will move to the front of their chairs on their side of the Altar to exchange the sign of peace. After the sign of peace, all Altar Servers will return to their chairs and stand. The BOOK will now take the Sacramentary off the Altar Table. The Deacon or Father will proceed to the Tabernacle and return with one or more CIBORIA. At this time the Crucifer brings the remaining ciboria to the Altar. When the Crucifer returns to his/her chair, all Altar

Servers will kneel in unison. After Father receives the Body and Blood of Christ, the Altar Servers will form a line by the first chair to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. After the Altar Servers have received communion under both species, anyone who will be holding the paten during Communion will move in an orderly fashion, behind the President's chair, to the credence table.

Father will then distribute Holy Communion to the Ministers of Holy Communion. When this is complete, the Altar Servers will pick up their patens and follow their respective Minister of Holy Communion to the front of the Sanctuary. Those Altar Servers who are not helping during Communion may be seated during Communion, but must stand immediately when Father returns to the Altar.

When the Ministers of Holy Communion are on the steps of the Sanctuary after Communion, the RC or Book will take the Precious Blood cup(s) from the Ministers of Holy Communion on the Tabernacle side to the credence table. The LC or Crucifer will take the precious Blood cup(s) from the Ministers on the Ambo side. Return the cups to the credence table.

After Communion, Father will begin consolidating the Body of Christ. As this time the Crucifer and LC will move to the Altar to take the empty ciboria and patens to the credence table. Please take 2 items at a time. Finally, the Deacon will take the ciborium to the Tabernacle. All Altar Servers, who have been standing, will turn to face the tabernacle and bow when the Deacon genuflects. When the entire Altar is finally cleared, i.e., the chalice is returned to the credence table and everyone is at their chairs, everyone will sit in unison, with or without the Deacon.

V. Announcements through the Procession out

At the end of Mass, Father will stand and say, "**Let us pray.**" All Altar Servers will stand and the Book will bring the Sacramentary to Father. After Father closes the Sacramentary, the Book returns to the proper chair and places the Sacramentary on a vacant chair.

When Father announces, "**The Lord be with you,**" and the Deacon says, "**The Mass has ended...**," this is the signal for the following actions to occur simultaneously:

The crucifer will go to the crucifix, pick it up, turn the face of the cross toward the parish community and wait for the RC and LC to extract their candles. The LC and RC will bow at the front of the Altar and collect their candles. Once the RC and LC are ready, the Crucifer will lead the RC and LC to the front of the Altar to take up positions for the exit procession. Once the Crucifer has reached the steps of the Sanctuary, the Book joins them in front of the procession (closest to the Altar). **DO NOT** wait for Father.

As soon as the Deacon and Father, now standing at the foot of the Sanctuary, bow to the Tabernacle, the Crucifer, RC, LC and Book will slowly turn, in unison, to their right, i.e., towards the Tabernacle, and face the back of the church. After all have turned, proceed to the rear of the church, turn right after the pews and proceed up the side aisle toward the

Sanctuary again. After reaching the Sanctuary put the cross and candles into their holders and clear the credence table of all the precious vessels.

When all the vessels have been put away, blow out the candles on the Altar and return to the front Sacristy to remove your cassocks. Thank you for serving in this special ministry and if you have any questions please let me know.

Father John and Deacon Mike Bless you in your Altar Server Ministry