

# St. Michael the Archangel

## Server Handbook

Altar Servers exercise an important role: helping the Priest to lead God's people in prayer. The care and attention that Altar Servers give to their ministry allows the prayer of the Church to take place with reverence and beauty.

The ministry of assisting in the sanctuary enhances the beauty of the Liturgy for all who have been gathered together to pray --so know what you are doing and do it well !!!

### **SERVERS' PROCEDURES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Before Mass:**

01. Arrive at least 15 minutes before the mass to get dressed and make sure that candles are lit.
02. Make sure your robe is the right size; the bottom of your robe should be right above the top of the shoes.
03. Tie your cincture around your waist.
04. Make sure the processional candles are lit and if there is a visiting priest, talk to him ahead of time to see if you need to do anything differently for him during the mass.
05. Five minutes before the mass time, get ready to say the prayer for the Servers along with the priest. After the prayer, all may go to the vestibule of the Church and get ready to begin the procession after the introduction by the Lector.

#### **Entrance Procession:**

06. If incense is used during the mass, one who carries the incense (thurifer) will lead the procession followed by the cross bearer, candles bearers, Lector with the book of Gospels and the Celebrant.
07. If there is only one server, he/she will take the cross. If there are only two servers, they will carry the processional candles. If there are three servers, determine who will carry the cross, candles etc. Usually, the tallest person among the servers will carry the cross. And the one who carries the cross will be responsible for showing the sacramentary/folder for the priest for the opening prayer and the prayer after Communion.
08. After the introductory notes by the Lector, the choir will begin. It is the time to begin the procession. Walk at a normal, relaxed speed; please do not run down the aisle.
09. As you reach the bottom of the steps, in front of the Altar, you make a deep (profound) bow. The cross bearer will go to the sacristy to leave the cross carefully on the bracket provided for it. Candle bearers also make a deep (profound) bow and place the candles

in front of the statues of the Angels in the sanctuary. If there are three servers, the cross bearer will sit on the bench beside the celebrant's chair. The other two may sit on the bench provided on the other side, behind the ambo.

### **Liturgy of the Word:**

10. After the Gloria, the cross bearer may bring the sacramentary/folder to the priest for the opening prayer (collect). Server should stand with the Missal/folder open on the right side of the celebrant, so that celebrant may see the congregation. (Currently, Father Vincent uses a stand and the server remains at his/her place.)
11. During the readings, all servers shall sit respectfully with their hands on their laps.

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist:**

12. During the collection, the cross bearer places the Missal/sacramentary (large book on the stand) is on the Altar. Another server brings the wooden tray to the Altar. After arranging the chalices on the Altar, the tray is taken back to the credence table. Then, servers go to their respective places and sit. When the priest goes down to receive the gifts, the servers accompany the priest and two of them stand on the right side and one stands on the left side of the priest.
13. The server who is given the ciborium places it on the right side of the Altar (the ambo side) and the server who is given the wine decanter remains standing with it on the same side. The third server, who is given the collection basket, places it right in front of the Altar and sits down. Meanwhile, the server who carried the ciborium picks up the water from the Altar and stands beside the server who has the wine. (You should be ready with the caps removed from the wine and water.) When the priest is ready to accept the wine and water, please present it to him with the handles directed toward him. Once you receive back the wine and water, return to the credence table and bring the ablution cup with the lavabo towel. The one who holds the bowl also carries the water pitcher. The other server holds the unfolded towel high. Please don't throw the towel into the hands of the priest. After washing and wiping the hands with the towel, the servers bow to the priest and return the bowl and the water pitcher to the credence table.
14. The servers then return to their places, but remain standing, because the priest will then invite the congregation to stand to enter into the Eucharistic prayer.

### **Eucharistic prayer:**

15. After the "Holy Holy Holy," servers kneel in front of the Altar with their hands folded.
16. During the prayer of the invocation of the Holy Spirit (priest holds his hands extended over the offering), the server rings the bells (one time).

17. During the consecration, when the priest shows the host to the people, the server rings the bells three times. This is repeated, when the priest shows the chalice to the people.
18. After the great AMEN, servers will proceed to the Altar with folded hands for the Our Father.
19. Next, the priest asks the congregation to share with one another a Sign of Peace. Then, the servers share the Peace with the Priest.

### **Communion:**

20. When it is time for communion, all servers receive communion before the EMHC's (Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion). Servers should reverently receive, then immediately move out of the way. After receiving communion, two servers get the communion plates and stand near the credence table until Father is ready to proceed down to the center aisle. Any extra servers return to their seats.
21. As Father moves down to distribute Communion to the congregation, the cross bearer removes the Missal/Sacramentary from the Altar. (Sometimes Father will tap the book to signal the server to replace it in the sacristy. Always be watching Father.)
22. When the distribution of communion is over, servers take the communion plates to the Priest for purification. Then they should be taken back to the credence table and placed in the brown felt cases. Father will cleanse the other items and may hand them to a server to replace on the credence table. (Please keep your eyes on Father incase he is trying to hand you an item.)

### **Concluding Rite**

23. When the priest says "let us pray", the cross bearer will bring the Missal/Sacramentary to the Priest and stand on his right side with the book open. (Currently, Father Vincent uses the stand.)
24. After the Final blessing, the servers (with their cross and candles) come down to the front of the Altar and wait for the priest to come down from Sanctuary to process out. The candle bearers will stand right behind the Priest and the cross bearer behind the candle bearers. The servers bow along with the priest, turn around and process out.
25. Once the procession reaches the vestibule of the Church, the servers may go back to the sacristy and put back the candles and cross in their respective places in the sacristy.
26. The Cross bearer will put out the candles in the sanctuary using the snuffer.
27. When the servers remove their robes, see that they are placed in the correct spot according to the size.
28. Before you leave the Sacristy, please sign the attendance sheet that is in the sacristy.

### Reminders:

- a. When you are standing or sitting, keep your hands folded. Do not play with your cincture or do anything else that may distract the people around you.
- b. Pay attention to the Priest because you never know when he may call you over.
- c. If you use the rest room or get a tissue, bow to the Tabernacle respectfully and go to the sacristy.
- d. It is better not to serve the mass if you are sick with a runny nose.
- e. Please follow the dress code without fail. "Sunday best" clothing and nice looking, QUIET shoes. Loud/'clicky' boots, heels or sandals are not appropriate because they are distracting to the congregation. Because you are an altar server who may be called to fill in at any Mass, it is a smart decision to always dress appropriately and wear quiet shoes.
- f. **NO LATE SERVERS. Period.** If Father has already left the sacristy, then it is too late to serve at that Mass.
- g. If you are going to be absent/out of town, please contact a fellow server for your substitute.
- h. During mass, Servers should respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest just like the congregation. Servers also join in singing the hymns of the liturgy. The congregation should see your mouth moving and witness you reverently participating for the entire mass.
- i. When the priest is proclaiming the Gospel, ALL servers should be facing him, listening to the Gospel. This is not a time to be looking around, or facing in a different direction.
- j. Servers should 'match' one another by folding your hands in the same way, moving in unison, and standing and sitting up straight. Feet should be flat on floor. If feet don't touch floor, avoid swinging them.
- k. Servers set an example. Younger children can learn reverence by watching how the Servers act. Your facial expression is EXTREMELY important. For example, you should not look like you are hiding a giggle. You should not look like you are bored out of your mind. You should not look like you are angry at someone.

## Words that all servers should know:

### ✘ The main areas of the church

The **sanctuary** is the area in the center and toward the front of the church where the altar, the ambo (lectern), and the priest's chair (presidential chair) are located.

The **sacristy** is the room where the priest and altar servers dress and prepare for Mass. Many of the items used in the celebration of the Mass are stored there.

The **nave** is the assembly place, containing the pews for the congregation.

The **vestibule** is the area at the back of church, where the baptismal font is located and where baptisms are often celebrated.

The **confessional** is located on Mary's side, opposite of the elevator, in our church.

### ✘ Special books that are used during the celebration of the Mass

The **Lectionary** is the large book containing the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, Responsorial Psalm and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading. There is also a separate **Book of the Gospels**.

The **Roman Missal** is the large book used by the priest when standing at his chair and at the altar during Mass. (The former name for this book was the **Sacramentary**.)

The **Brown Binder** contains the opening prayer.

### ✘ Special vessels used in Mass:

The **chalice** is the cup that holds the wine for consecration and communion.

The **paten** is a plate that holds the bread for consecration and communion.

The **ciborium** is a special vessel used to hold the bread for communion of the people. It has a lid or cover.

The **cruets** are the small glass jars that contain the water and wine to be used at Mass. Cruets are usually made of glass, with a handle.

The **Servers' Plates** are smaller patens used for catching a dropped host.

✘ The **vestments** and **linens** used in Mass:

The **alb** is a long white robe worn by the priest and altar servers (in our parish).

The **cincture** is a rope or cord worn around the waist over the alb,

The **stole** is a garment in the form of a long, narrow band of cloth which the priest wears draped over his shoulders and hanging down in front, or a deacon wears draped over one shoulder and fastened at his side. It may be white or colored.

The **chasuble** is the outer garment worn by the priest at Mass. It may be white or another liturgical color and usually matches the color of the stole.

The **corporal** is a white cloth that is spread upon the altar during Mass to hold the chalice, paten and ciborium.

The **pall** is a small, square, protective cover of stiffened cloth placed on the chalice during Mass.

The **purificator** is a white linen cloth which the priest uses to wipe out the chalice during Mass.

The **chalice veil** is a cloth that covers the chalice during the Mass when the chalice is not being used.

The **finger towel**, or hand towel, is a cloth napkin used to dry the priest's hands. When using this, you will also need the glass dish for collecting the poured water.

✘ **Special Items:**

[The **miter** is a ceremonial hat worn by a bishop on special occasions. The **crosier** (more often referred to as "staff") is the shepherd's staff carried by the bishop.]

✘ The following **furniture** items may be found in the sanctuary:

The **presidential chair/presider's chair** is the chair from which the priest presides during the liturgy of the word and during the concluding prayers of the Mass.

The **lectern** is a stand from which the priest or another minister reads or speaks to the congregation. The stand used for the scripture readings and the homily is also called the **pulpit** or an **ambo**. At St. Michael's it is all the same stand, same place.

The **altar** is the holy table from which the priest presides over the liturgy of the Eucharist. It is covered with an altar cloth.

The **credence table** is another name for the side table in the sanctuary where the wine and water cruets, communion patens, etc., are kept during Mass when they are not being used.

The **gifts table** is the table that holds the bread and wine before it is presented to the altar. (This is also called the **offertory table** and is located near the baptismal font in the vestibule at St. Michael's.)

✘ **Other Special Items**

The **ambry** is the cabinet that holds the holy oils, and is located in our vestibule.

The **Paschal Candle** is the large, white Easter candle

The **tabernacle** is the large, ornate (fancy) safe in which the consecrated Eucharistic is kept for the communion of the sick and for adoration by the people outside of Mass. In our church, it is located directly behind the altar, and you must walk up the steps to access it. The **tabernacle key**, when not in use, is kept in a safe place. During Mass, the tabernacle key is in the tabernacle door.

The **sanctuary lamp**, in our church, hangs from the ceiling in the center of the sanctuary. When lit, it tells us that Christ is present in the tabernacle.

The **altar bells** are located on the floor, at the corner of the altar.

The **censer** (or **thurible**) is a metal container on a chain in which incense is burned on a piece of charcoal.

The **incense boat** is a covered container, with a spoon, for the incense that will be burned in the censer.

The **funeral pall** is a large decorated cloth that covers the casket during a funeral Mass.

The **holy water sprinkler** (or **aspergill**) is a wand, used by the priest to sprinkle holy water on the people or objects that he blesses.

**Host** is another term for the bread that is consecrated at Mass for the communion of the priest and the people.

**Chrism** is the holy oil used to anoint people in baptism, confirmation and ordination. It is made from olive oil and a special perfume. The chrism is kept in the ambry (in the vestibule, near the baptismal font in our church.)

The **monstrance** is a large, standing vessel used to show people the holy bread that is the body of Christ. The **lunette** is a small glass container that holds the host and is put inside the monstrance. This is used during Eucharistic Adoration.

