

## ALTAR SERVER PROCEDURES

### REVISED: FEBURARY 2012

Wear appropriate footwear. No sneakers or flip-flops. Sandals are acceptable. Be sure you wear the longest alb possible without creating a tripping hazard for yourself. Albs that are mid-shin are too short. Arrive at least 10 minutes before mass.

#### I. BEFORE MASS

Sign in on the green sign-in sheet

- A. Make sure candles are lit.
- B. Check credence table in the sanctuary to be sure it has the following items:
  - 1. Several chalices
  - 2. Purificators (one for each chalice)
  - 3. Corporal (altar cloth)
  - 4. Cruet of water
  - 5. Small hand bowl (lavabo bowl) and a pitcher of water with towel

*Note: It is not the Altar servers' responsibility to place the items on the credence table but you still want to be sure they are there. If not, notify the sacristan or a Friar.*

- C. Be sure the cross is in the front of the church.
- D. Check, especially before the 4:00 mass, that the tab of the Sacramentary is set to the correct day. Again, this is not your responsibility per se, but you want to make sure it has been set properly so it doesn't have to be done at the time of the reading.
- E. Select an alb and secure it with the knot of the belt on your right hip.

#### II. PROCESSION

- A. The order of the procession is:
  - 1. Cross (altar server # 1)

2. Eucharistic Ministers in pairs
3. Lector, paired up with Eucharistic Minister if odd number of Eucharistic Ministers
4. Altar server #2 alone
5. Lector with Book of Gospels alone
6. Presider

*Note: Procession should begin in the above order as the organist plays the opening meditation song.*

- B. Altar server #1 begins the procession at the beginning of the second verse of the opening hymn. Walking pace should be slow but not a crawl, holding the cross as high as is comfortably possible.
- C. Altar server #1 proceeds to the foot of the sanctuary, makes a brief pause and then turns sharply to the left, moving around the outside of the sanctuary and columns, and places the cross against the back wall next to the doors to the chapel, preferably in the back left corner of the church. Go to the seat at the end of the row closest to the chapel and remain standing.
- D. Altar server #2 proceeds up the aisle and goes directly to the foot of the sanctuary just one or two steps to the right of center and remains standing facing the altar.
- E. While standing there, the lector with the Book of Gospels will stop at the foot of the sanctuary, bow, and proceed into the sanctuary to place the Book on the altar.
- F. Next, the Presider will stop at the foot of the sanctuary. Watching out of the corner of your eye, altar server #2 will bow at the same time as the Presider.
- G. The Presider will step up into the sanctuary while altar server #2 turns sharply to the right and walks around the cantor and columns, and stands in front of the chair at the far end of the row.

NOTE: From this point until the offertory, altar server #1 has no responsibilities.

### III. OPENING RITE

- A. Altar server #2 is the book bearer. After the Kyrie (Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy) and the Gloria (not always said), Presider will say "Let us Pray". Altar server #2 should be ready with Sacramentary in hand. Walk onto the sanctuary from behind the Presider and open the book to the correct page. Stand slightly to the right (your left) of the Presider, facing him at a slight angle, while he reads. Hold the book at his chest level, open and facing the Presider. After reading, return to the seat with the book. Since the new translation was published in 2011, the friars have been using a 3-ring binder in place of the Sacramentary. If the binder is being used, the Presider will have it with him. Altar server #2 should follow the same path to the Presider without the Sacramentary, who will present the binder already opened to the correct page. Hold the binder as described above. When the Presider finishes, he will keep the binder and altar server #2 will return to the seat empty-handed. *Note: When the Presider says "Let us pray", walk deliberately, but not quickly around the back of the Presider and onto the sanctuary. It is supposed to take about 5 seconds for this to happen, so don't rush but be sure to be ready to move the moment Presider says "Let us pray".*

### IV. PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

- A. **Prepare the altar**– Altar server #2 prepares the altar. This is a two-step process. This begins when the ushers reach the first pew and begin taking up the collection. As they turn at the first pew to begin the collection, altar server #2 should walk around to the back of the sanctuary and into the sanctuary, take the 3–

ring binder from the Presider and approach the altar, placing the binder on the altar slightly to the left of center. Keep the binder closed. Go to the credence table and bring the corporal (altar cloth) back to the altar and open it slowly and reverently in the center of the altar. Align the bottom of the corporal with the edge of the altar. Go back to the credence table and get one chalice and one purificator. Place the chalice on the upper right hand corner of the corporal, and the purificator to the right of the corporal aligned with the edge of the altar. Open the binder to the appropriate tab. Go back and stand to the side of the credence table nearest to the center of the sanctuary and wait. *Note: Each Friar has a preference for where he likes the binder to be placed. Father Andrew likes it at an angle at about the 10:00 position on the corporal. All the other Friars prefer the binder on the center of the corporal aligned with the edge of the altar. Father Cid prefers that all chalices and purificators be placed on the altar to the right of the corporal.*

- B. Receive the Gifts** – Altar server #1 receives the gifts. Altar server #1 must watch the Presider for the cue to move. When the Presider gets up, altar server #1 must also get up, cross the sanctuary between the altar and the pulpit and meet the Presider at the foot of the sanctuary. Descend the steps, walking one step behind the Presider, eventually joining him at his side. He will receive the wine and hand it to you. He will keep the tray with the bread. Wait for the Presider to turn back towards the altar, then with the wine, return alone along the same path to the side of the altar where altar server #2 will join you with the cruet of water. Wait near the side edge of the altar until the Presider turns toward you. As the Presider turns toward you, take a small step forward. Altar server #2 extends the water cruet towards the Presider who will take it and pour a drop into the wine pitcher. He will hand the cruet back to altar server #2 and take the wine pitcher from altar server #1. Both altar servers return to the credence table at the same time and altar server #2

places the cruet of water back on the credence table. *Note: Father Cid will pour all of the wine from the pitcher into the chalices and hand the empty pitcher to altar server #1, who should return the pitcher to the credence table.*

- C. **Washing of the Presider's hands** – Altar server #1 takes the lavabo bowl and water pitcher from the credence table while altar server #2 takes the towel. Both return to the side of the altar and wait for the Presider to turn towards you. Step forward and wash the Presider's hands. Altar server #1 will pour water from the pitcher onto the Presider's hands, catching the water in the lavabo bowl, and altar server #2 will present the towel. After the Presider is finished drying his hands, return the items to the credence table (altar server #2 should neatly fold the towel) and stand down off the back corner of the sanctuary, directly behind the credence table. Do not stand near the seats. Remain standing throughout the Eucharistic Prayer. *Note: Father Cid will bow after drying his hands and this bow should be returned by the altar servers.*

## V. COMMUNION RITE

- A. **Receive communion** – The sign of peace is to be exchanged after stepping up into the sanctuary. After the sign of peace, altar servers are to step to the back of the sanctuary to the side of the credence table nearest the center of the sanctuary. Receive communion there.
- B. **Clearing the altar** – As soon as the eucharistic ministers clear the sanctuary to distribute communion, altar server #2 steps forward and retrieves the binder from the altar (some friars will do this themselves) and places it on the table next to the Presider and then returns to his/her seat. Immediately following this, altar server #1 reverently folds and removes the corporal and places it back on the credence table and returns to his/her seat.

*Note #1 – Not all Friars leave the binder on the altar for you to remove. If the book is closed and you can step in to take it off the altar without getting in the way, do so. Otherwise just leave it there until everyone disperses for communion.*

*Note #2 – When this process is completed, there should be nothing left on the altar. If there is anything else on the altar, place the item on the credence table before removing the corporal.*

## VI. CONCLUDING RITE

**A. Closing Prayer** – After communion, the Presider will stand and say, “Let us pray.” As with the opening rite, altar server #2 should walk onto the sanctuary and hold either the book or 3–ring binder in the same manner, returning to the seat at the completion of the prayer. *Note: Father Tom will usually read the closing prayer from his seat without assistance from altar server #2.*

## VII. RECESSION

**A. Cross** – At the moment the closing hymn begins, altar server #1 retrieves the cross from the back of the church and retraces his/her steps, slowly, to the front of the sanctuary. Position yourself at the second pew and then turn to face the altar. Altar server #2 stands in place until the Presider begins to move, then recess around the pillar, following the other ministers to the front of the sanctuary. As the other ministers move into position in front of the sanctuary, altar server #2 should move to the right of the Presider, standing immediately next to him.

**B. Reverencing the altar** – At some point during the recessional hymn after the all the ministers have taken their positions, the Presider will bow. Altar server #2 should watch the Presider out of the corner of your eye in order bow at the same time as him. Altar server #1 will not bow, but turn, raise the cross and lead

the recession. Altar server #2 will walk directly in front of the Presider in the recession.

- C. Altar server #1 should return the cross to its resting place along the front wall of church, and both altar servers should proceed outside with the Presider to greet the patrons.

After mass see that the following are done:

- A. Ask the sacristan if the candles should be extinguished.
- B. Place the cross against the front wall for the next mass. After 5:00, place the cross back in the stand in the sanctuary so it is there for the weekday masses.
- C. Hang the albs neatly in the closet.

# ALTAR SERVER DUTIES

## BEFORE MASS

1. Light candles
2. Check the credence table, it should have the following items:
  1. Several chalices and purificators
  - Corporal (altar cloth)
  - Cruet of water
  - Small hand bowl (lavabo bowl) and a pitcher of water with towel
3. Bring the cross to the front of the church

## Altar server #1

- Carry the cross at the head of the procession and recession.
- Receive the gifts with friar (take the pitcher of wine).
- Bring the lavabo bowl and pitcher of water to friar (to wash hands).
- During communion, removes the corporal from the altar.

## Altar server #2

- Walk in front of the Book in the procession.
- Hold the binder for the friar.
- Set the altar.

- Bring the cruet of water to the friar (with the other server who has the pitcher of wine).
- Bring the towel to the friar for hand-washing (with the other server who has the lavabo bowl and the pitcher of water).
- During communion, removes the Sacramentary binder from the altar.

## **AFTER MASS**

1. Blow out the candles
2. Leave the cross in the sacristy for the next mass.
3. Hang alb neatly in the closet.