



ALTAR SERVER GUIDE
prince of peace catholic church

Always Remember:

Being an Altar Server at Prince of Peace Catholic Church is a great privilege. We have the great grace to lead our people in prayer at the Divine Liturgy. Because the Liturgy is so important, we must know how to serve at the Altar well, and we must always be concerned that we discharge our duties with faith, reverence and devotion.

Here are some things we should always remember:

1. when there are servers scheduled, servers must show up. If a server is unable to do so for any reason, he is to call for a substitute at least 24 hours in advance. Failure to provide for a substitute can result in temporary suspension or dismissal from the Altar Server program.
2. Servers are to report to the sacristy at least 20 minutes before a scheduled Mass. If servers appear later than 20 minutes, they will be asked to sit with their families at Mass.
3. Servers should always be dressed in black pants, black dress shoes, and a white shirt.
4. As soon as the Server arrives, he should put on his cassock and surplice. Remember that it is the Servers' duty to make sure that all cassocks and surplices are put up correctly in the cabinet. If he sees one on the floor, he is to hang it up immediately.
5. Even if you are not scheduled to serve, all servers are welcome to suit up and sit *in choir* at any Mass. They will not have an assigned duty, but are welcome to be at Mass with the servers and clergy.
6. When in Procession or standing, hands should be joined. If one hand is occupied, the other should be placed across the chest. When seated, hands should be placed on the knees and legs should never be crossed in the sanctuary. All Servers should make the same bows that the Priest and Deacon make, without being exaggerated.
7. Whenever servers go in Procession in pairs, if they do not have anything in their hands, they genuflect at the foot of the Altar and bow to each other before going up the Altar Steps to their places.
8. During the *Confiteor*, *Gloria* and *Credo*, servers face the tabernacle. They bow towards the tabernacle at the Name of Jesus and at the *et incarnates est* of the *Credo*.
9. During the Gospel and the Prayers of the Faithful, servers face the Deacon at the Ambo. If the name of Jesus occurs, they bow towards the Ambo.

Duties Before Mass

As soon as a server is dressed, he should ask the Master of Ceremonies if there is anything to do before Mass. The Acolytes should light the Candles. The Thurifer should immediately prepare the Charcoals for Mass and make sure that there is enough incense in the Boat for the Mass. The Master of Ceremonies will assign duties. If there is time, the servers are, on their own, to go to the Communion Rail in the church and kneel to make their Preparation for Mass. At 10 minutes til the hour, they should be in the sacristy. At the sign of the MC at 5 minutes til the hour and never later, the servers with Cross, Candles, Incense get in their formation in the Priests' Sacristy facing the Cross on the Vesting Table.

Assigned Positions

At a Low Mass (Daily Mass, Sundays 8a), there are two Acolytes. There is no Incense, Cross, Candles or Bookbearer at a Low Mass.

At a Sung Mass (Holy Day Masses, Saturdays 5p, Sundays 6p), there are Crossbearer, Bookbearer, 2 Acolytes and a Master of Ceremonies. If there are insufficient servers, the Crossbearer can double as Bookbearer.

At a Solemn Mass (Holy Days at 7p, Sundays 10a), there are Thurifer and Boatbearer, Crossbearer, 2 Acolytes, Bookbearer, and a Master of Ceremonies. On particular feasts, there may be 4 or 6 Torchbearers, but not on a regular Sunday.

Each position has defined duties, and if you are serving in that position, you should know how to accomplish your duty.

Servers who do not have an assigned duty are welcome to sit *in choir*. They represent the liturgical choir and are there to add extra solemnity to the Mass. New servers will be asked to sit in Choir until they can be trained in one of the positions of the Mass.

Low Mass

When it is time for Low Mass to start, the Priest will say:

V. *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.* (Our help is in the name of the LORD.)

The servers respond:

R. *Qui fecit caelum et terram.* (Who has made heaven and earth.)

The servers make the Sign of the Cross and bow to the Cross above the Vesting Table. They turn around.

A1 is on the right and hands holy water to A2 on the left, who makes the Sign of the Cross and rings the Bell once. The servers then proceed around the Communion Rail, enter the sanctuary, and genuflect on the right knee at the foot of the altar. If they are in pairs, they bow to each other and go up the Altar Steps to their places.

At Low Mass, all of the Mass except the Readings takes place at the Altar.

If there is no Homily (as happens often at Daily Mass), the Deacon will go immediately to the Altar to prepare for the Offertory. A1&A2 rise immediately and go to the Credence, where they pick up the Water (A2) and Wine (A1) Cruets.

NB: If there is a Ciborium on the Credence to be consecrated, A1 brings that to the Deacon first and then returns to the Credence to pick up the Cruets with A2.

They proceed immediately to the side of the altar, where they together bow to the Deacon and hold out their Cruets. When they have both presented their cruets and received them back from the Deacon, they together bow to the Deacon and return to the Credence, where A1 picks up the Lavabo Pitcher and Bowl and A2 picks up the Manutergium (Hand Towel). They proceed immediately to the side of the Altar, where they together bow to the priest and then wash the priest's hands. A2 should unfold the Manutergium and hold it out, and he does not let go of it unless the priest takes it from him. A1&A2 together bow to the priest and return the Lavabo Pitcher, Bowl and Manutergium to the Credence.

NB: Care should be taken that the Lavabo Pitcher is not put back into the Bowl when there is Water in the Bowl!

A1&A2, followed by any other servers *in choir*, in pairs, circle around from behind the altar to the kneeling pads at the front of the altar. The left line goes to the left of the Altar, the right to the right. All servers should end up in front of the kneeling pads at the foot of the Altar.

The servers continue to stand (NB: Do not kneel.).

When the *Sanctus* is said, the servers do not ring the bell. As soon as the *Sanctus* has been recited (but not before it has been completed), the servers all kneel together.

When the Priest spreads his hands over the Gifts at the Epiclesis, A1 rings the Bell one time.

When the Priest bows over the Bread at the Consecration of the Host, the servers all bow to the ground. After the Priest has said the words of Consecration, all the servers kneel erect. A1 rings the Bell three times (and does not ring it at the Priest's genuflection after the Consecration). When the Priest genuflects, the servers bow to the ground and then kneel erect. The same is done for the Consecration of the Chalice.

When the Amen has been said after the Eucharistic Prayer, the servers stand for the Our Father.

When the Deacon invites everyone to share a Sign of Peace, the servers bow to each other. A1&A2 go immediately to the Credence to get the Patens and return to their places.

When the Priest receives from the Chalice, A1 rings the Bell once.

The servers rise immediately and go to the top step to receive Communion.

Servers receive the Host on the tongue. When the last server has received Communion, all of the servers rise, go down the altar steps, and kneel at the kneeling pads, except for A1&A2, who accompany the Priest and Deacon to distribute Holy Communion.

When the Priest and Deacon have finished distributing Holy Communion, A1&A2 give their patens to the Priest and Deacon.

When the Sacrament has been returned to the Tabernacle, A1 rings the bell once time. A1&A2 then proceed immediately to the Credence, where A2 gets the Water Cruet. A2 proceeds directly to the side of the altar. (NB: If there is a Ciborium on the Corporal on the Altar, A1 goes with A2 to retrieve it.) Other servers are seated. (A1 if he is there to retrieve the Ciborium) and A2 bows to the Priest, pours the Water into the Chalice slowly, (A1 retrieves the Ciborium if necessary) and when the Priest raises the Chalice and separates his fingers, A2 with the Water Cruet (and A1 with the Ciborium if necessary) returns to the Credence.

As soon as the Priest has finished the Postcommunion Prayer, all servers come down to the Kneeling Pads as they did before the *Sanctus* and stand where they did at the *Sanctus*. They bow profoundly and cross themselves when the Priest gives the Blessing.

The Priest and Deacon kiss the Altar and come to the foot of the Altar, where:

(on weekdays) : all kneel for the Prayers After Low Mass, and then...

(at all Low Masses) : all genuflect together with the Priest. A1&A2 lead, and the other servers follow in pairs.

At Daily Mass, A1&A2 lead the Recessional back into the Priests' Sacristy, where the servers go off to the right, and then everyone bows to the Cross.

At Sunday or Holy Day Low Masses, A1&A2 lead the Recessional into the Narthex, where the servers form a semi-circle before the Door, and then everyone bows to each other!

The Priest says:

V. *Prosit.*

And everyone responds:

R. *Omnibus et singulis.* (Each and every one.)

The servers kneel.

The Priest then blesses the servers with the words: *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis: Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super vos et maneat semper.* (May the Blessing of Almighty God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain with you always.)

And everyone responds: *Amen.*

Sung Mass

When it is time for Sung or Solemn Mass to start, the Priest will say:

V. *Procedamus in pace.* (Let us go forth in peace.)

The servers respond:

R. *In nomine Christi. Amen.* (Who has made heaven and earth.)

The servers make the Sign of the Cross and bow to the Cross above the Vesting Table. They turn around.

The Processional Order is as follows: Crossbearer, A1&A2 with their Candles, Bookbearer alone, any servers *in choir* in pairs, the MC, the Deacon and the Priest.

The Procession proceeds directly to their places in front of the Baptismal Font. When the lights come up and the Bell is rung three times, the Crossbearer begins the Procession. **Do not wait to begin the Procession: start immediately after the Bell.**

When the Crossbearer and A1&A2 with their Candles reach the Communion Rail, they bow their heads. The Crossbearer goes left, places the Cross in its stand and goes to his place. The Candles go up the Altar Steps and place their Candles on the edge of the Credence Table.

The Bookbearer alone and any servers *in choir* go all the way to the foot of the Altar, where they genuflect.

If they are in pairs, after they genuflect, they bow to each other and go up the Altar Steps to their places. All servers go to their proper places.

During the *Confiteor*, everyone in the sanctuary faces the Tabernacle and bows. As soon as the *Confiteor* is finished, everyone returns to their normal position. When the Priest intones the *Gloria*, the servers face the Tabernacle. They bow whenever Jesus' Name is sung.

After the first time Jesus' Name is sung, the MC prepares the Book.

After the second time Jesus' Name is sung, the Bookbearer goes to the MC, who gives him the Book. The Bookbearer proceeds immediately to the Priest and then presents the Book open to the page with the Collect facing the Priest. The Bookbearer then holds the Book in front of the Priest on the step.

If Jesus' Name is mentioned in the Collect, all bow to the Tabernacle except the Bookbearer. The Priest will close the Book.

As soon as the Second Reading has begun, A1&A2 rise and go to the Credence, where they pick up their Candles and stand facing the Nave. When the Deacon rises to ask for a Blessing, they come on either side

of him. When the Deacon goes to the Altar, they go in a line: A1 – Deacon – A2. The Deacon picks up the Book of the Gospel, and the three go to the Ambo. A1&A2 stand at either side of the Deacon.

When the Gospel is finished, A1&A2 accompany the Deacon to the Altar again, where the Priest will meet them. They should be in a line: A1-Deacon – Priest – A2.

They bow together. A1, Deacon and A2 go in a line back to their places. A1&A2 place their Candles on the Credence.

After the Homily, the Priest will sit. When he stands, all stand and face the tabernacle for the *Credo*. During the *Credo*, all bow at the *et incarnatus est*. When the *Credo* is ended, all face the Ambo for the Prayers of the Faithful.

After the Prayers of the Faithful, the Deacon will go immediately to the Altar to prepare for the Offertory. The Crossbearer (not accompanied by Candles) goes to the back of the Church with the Cross for the Offertory Procession.

A1&A2 rise immediately and go to the Credence, and bring to the Deacon at the side of the Altar any Ciboria to be consecrated.

As soon as the Deacon has spread out the Corporals and unveiled the Chalice, and the Collection is complete, the Priest meets him at the Altar to bow and go to the entrance of the sanctuary at the rail. A1&A2 go with Priest and Deacon and stand at either side.

As soon as the Crossbearer sees that the Priest, Deacon and Servers are at the Rail and the Giftbearers are in place behind him, he proceeds immediately to the Altar. DO NOT WAIT!!!! Before the Rail, he stops briefly, turns left, puts the Cross in its place and returns to his position.

The Priest will give the Wine Cruet to A1 and the Ciborium to the Deacon. A1 with the Wine Cruet and A2 with nothing in his hand go to the Credence Table to pick up the Water Cruet.

They proceed immediately to the side of the altar, where they together bow to the Deacon and hold out their Cruets. When they have both presented their cruets and received them back from the Deacon, they together bow to the Deacon and return to the Credence, where A1 picks up the Lavabo Pitcher and Bowl and A2 picks up the Manutergium (Hand Towel). They proceed immediately to the side of the Altar, where they together bow to the priest and then wash the priest's hands. A2 should unfold the Manutergium and hold it out, and he does not let go of it unless the priest takes it from him. A1&A2 together bow to the priest and return the Lavabo Pitcher, Bowl and Manutergium to the Credence.

NB: Care should be taken that the Lavabo Pitcher is not put back into the Bowl when there is Water in the Bowl!

A1&A2, followed by the Crossbearer and any other servers *in choir*, in pairs, circle around from behind the altar to the kneeling pads at the front of the altar. The left line goes to the left of the Altar, the right to the right. All servers should end up in front of the kneeling pads at the foot of the Altar.

The servers continue to stand (NB: Do not kneel.).

When the *Sanctus* is said, the servers do not ring the bell. As soon as the *Sanctus* has been recited (but not before it has been completed), the servers all kneel together.

When the Priest spreads his hands over the Gifts at the Epiclesis, A1 rings the Bell one time.

When the Priest bows over the Bread at the Consecration of the Host, the servers all bow to the ground. After the Priest has said the words of Consecration, all the servers kneel erect. A₁ rings the Bell three times (and does not ring it at the Priest's genuflection after the Consecration). When the Priest genuflects, the servers bow to the ground and then kneel erect. The same is done for the Consecration of the Chalice.

When the Amen has been said after the Eucharistic Prayer, the servers stand for the Our Father.

When the Deacon invites everyone to share a Sign of Peace, the servers bow to each other. A₁&A₂ go immediately to the Credence to get the Patens and return to their places. A₁&A₂ distribute other patens to other servers.

When the Priest receives from the Chalice, A₁ rings the Bell once.

The servers rise immediately and go to the top step to receive Communion, taking care not to move from their position.

Servers receive the Host on the tongue. When the last server has received Communion, all of the servers rise, go down the altar steps, and kneel at the kneeling pads, except for A₁&A₂ and other patenbearers, who accompany the Priest, Deacon and Extraordinary Ministers to distribute Holy Communion.

When the Priest and Deacon have finished distributing Holy Communion, patenbearers give their patens to the Priest,, Deacon or MC, or place them on the right corporal and go back to their position.

When the Sacrament has been returned to the Tabernacle, A₁ rings the bell once time.

A₁&A₂ lead the servers back to their positions in the sanctuary. Servers are seated immediately.

A₁&A₂ then proceed immediately to the Credence, where A₂ gets the Water Cruet
A₂ proceeds directly to the side of the altar. (NB: If there is a Ciborium on the Corporal on the Altar, A₁ goes with A₂ to retrieve it.) Other servers are seated. (A₁ if he is there to retrieve the Ciborium) and A₂ bows to the Priest, pours the Water into the Chalice slowly, (A₁ retrieves the Ciborium if necessary) and when the Priest raises the Chalice and separates his fingers, A₂ with the Water Cruet (and A₁ with the Ciborium if necessary) returns to the Credence.

While the Priest is doing the Announcements, the MC prepares the Book and the Bookbearer receives the Book. As soon as the Priest approaches the Sedilia, the Bookbearer presents the Priest the Book with the pages facing him. The Priest then closes the Book and the Bookbearer places it on the Credence.

After the Postcommunion Prayer, the Priest gives the Blessing. All servers bow profoundly in the direction of the Priest and cross themselves when the Priest gives the Blessing. Crossbearer goes immediately to get the Cross, A₁&A₂ their Candles, and all the Servers go immediately to their place of formation in the nave outside of the Rail.

The Priest and Deacon kiss the Altar and come to the foot of the Altar.

NB: If there is a hymn, all stand until the last verse of the hymn. If the hymn is to the Blessed Virgin, all face the Lady Altar.

As soon as the MC sees everyone in position, he gives the sign.
All genuflect.

The Crossbearer leads the Recessional into the Narthex, where the servers form a semi-circle before the Door, and then everyone bows to the Cross, **whose bearer remains standing!**

The Priest says:

V. *Prosit.*

And everyone responds:

R. *Omnibus et singulis.* (Each and every one.)

The servers kneel.

The Priest then blesses the servers with the words: *Benedictio Dei omnipotentis: Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super vos et maneat semper.* (May the Blessing of Almighty God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain with you always.)

And everyone responds: *Amen.*

Solemn Mass

All of the above for Sung Mass is also followed at Solemn Mass, except for the following:

The Thurifer and the Boatbearer precede the Cross at all times.

Incense is usually imposed in the Sacristy before the Procession and again at the Altar.

Thurifer and Boatbearer come up at the beginning of Mass, and stand at the side of the Altar. The MC and the Thurifer accompany the Priest around the Altar.

During the Psalm, the Thurifer and Boatbearer go into the Sacristy to retrieve the Thurible and Boat. As soon as the Second Reading has begun, they leave the Sacristy and take their place in front of A1&A2 with their Candles.

As soon as the Second Reading is finished, Thurifer and Boatbearer go in front of the Priest to impose Incense. When they are done, they go in front of the Altar and wait for the Deacon and A1&A2 to arrive. They stand behind where A1&A2 would go flanking the Deacon. They accompany the Deacon to the Ambo and stand behind the Deacon. They return with the Deacon in Procession standing behind A1&A2.

During the Homily, the Thurifer should add new charcoals.

As soon as the Priest is offering the Chalice at the Offertory, Thurifer and Boat should approach the altar at its side. After Incense is imposed, the Boat should step off the Altar and stand. After the Deacon has incensed the people, he gives the Thurible back to the Thurifer, standing next to the Boatbearer, and the two go in the Sacristy.

As soon as the Sanctus is intoned, the Thurifer and Boatbearer come from the Sacristy and proceed around the Communion Rail to the foot of the Altar. When the Sanctus is over, and not before, they kneel with

the other servers. As soon as the bell rings for the Epiclesis, the Boatbearer should put more Incense in the thurible.

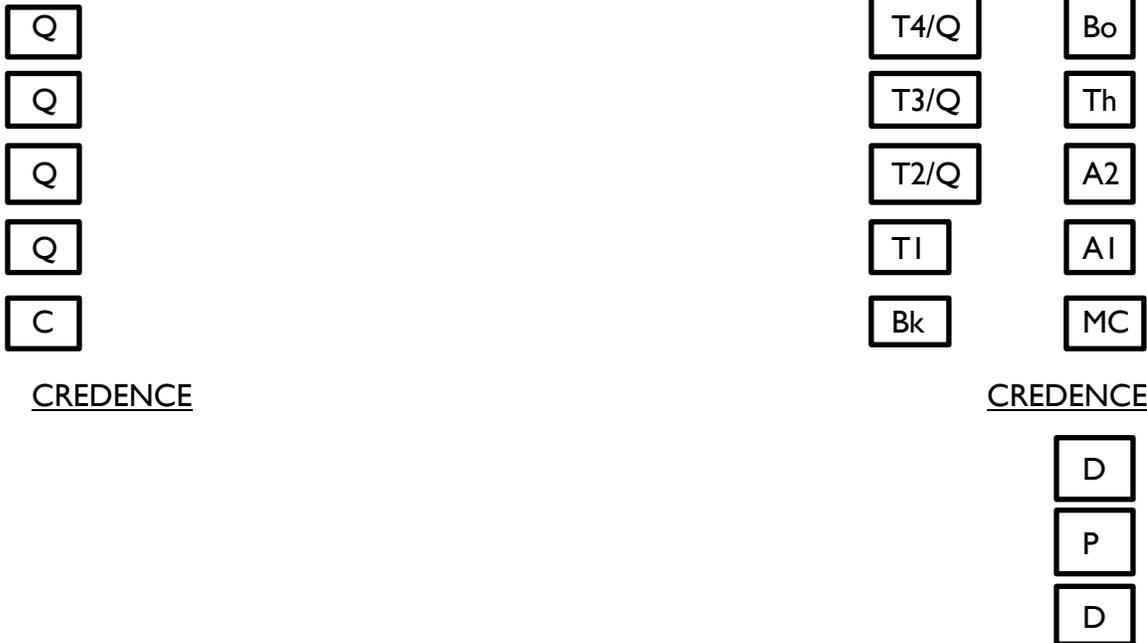
When the Amen is sung after the Eucharistic Prayer and all stand, Thurifer and Boatbearer rise and place the Thurible and Boat in the Sacristy. They then return immediately around the Communion Rail, genuflect at the foot of the altar, and go to opposite sides of the kneeling pads.

There is no need to retrieve the Thurible for the Recessional, but the Thurifer and Boatbearer should take their usual places at the head of the Recessional. The Thurifer and Boat should open the doors for the Procession if they are not already open.

Duties After Mass

After the Prosit, the servers then proceed to the sacristy. A1&A2 extinguish the Candles. They should then ask the Priest or Deacon if there is anything else they can do. Servers then go to the Communion Rail to make their Thanksgiving prayer. When they have completed that prayer, they can remove their cassock and surplice and put them on the hangers in the sacristy closets. They should assist any other servers to make sure all of the cassocks and surplices are hung up neatly in the closets.

Positions in the Sanctuary at Mass



Q= servers in choir, T= torchbearers, Bo= boatbearer, Th= thurifer,
 C= crossbearer, A= acolyte, Bk= bookbearer, MC= Master of Ceremonies,
 D= Deacon, P= Priest.

Prayer to Saint John Berchmans, Patron Saint of Altar Boys

Dear Saint John, you died at a very young age, but in that short time you learned to live an exemplary life as a member of the Society of Jesus. Directed by your Guardian Angel, whom you confidently invoked, you learned to be a most humble server at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Help altar boys imitate you in their service at Eucharistic celebrations as well as in their conduct with others. Amen.

