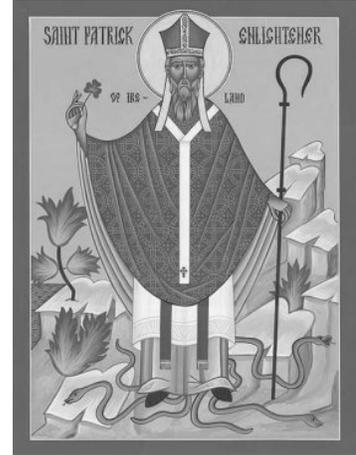


**Saint Patrick Church  
Victor New York**

Guidelines for Altar Servers



Altar Servers' Prayer

Father in Heaven,  
your Son, Jesus Christ showed his love for You by serving his  
needy brothers and sisters.

I now ask You to give me Your help as I serve You and Your people.

Open my mouth to praise You in word and song. Open my ears to hear Your word.

Open my hands to do Your work well. Take from my heart all distracting thoughts.

Help me know what I should do, and do it well. Help me to serve reverently at Your Holy Altar,  
And so give You praise and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

To parents and altar servers:

Peace be with you!

Thank you for your willingness to serve God and His people, and to assist the priest and the deacon through the ministry of altar serving at Mass. Know and believe that through this ministry, you perform such importance task. To your peers alone, you give witness not only to active participation at Mass but also to serving during liturgical celebrations.

The importance of your ministry demands from you love and knowledge of the celebration of the Mass. May these guidelines provide you some help that you may serve at the altar worthily and well.

It is my hope that your service at the altar will draw you to deeper love for Jesus and His Church, and to greater service to God and His people.

May God bless you always!

In Christ,

Father Edison

## **Guidelines for Altar Servers from the US Catholic Bishops**

1. Although institution into the ministry of acolyte is reserved to lay men, the diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. Such persons may carry out all the functions listed in no. 100 (with the exception of the distribution of Holy Communion) and nos. 187 - 190 and no. 193 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.  
The determination that women and girls may function as servers in the liturgy should be made by the bishop on the diocesan level so that there might be a uniform diocesan policy.
2. Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. They should have already received holy communion for the first time and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.
3. Servers should receive proper formation before they begin to function. The formation should include instruction on the Mass and its parts and their meaning, the various objects used in the liturgy (their names and use), and the various functions of the server during the Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Servers should also receive appropriate guidance on maintaining proper decorum and attire when serving Mass and other functions.
4. Since the role of server is integral to the normal celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest. On Sundays and other more important occasions, two or more servers should be employed to carry out the various functions normally entrusted to these ministers.

## **General Housekeeping**

1. Be attentive to the schedule. As soon as you receive a copy of the schedule, check the dates and Mass times assigned to you. If there is any conflict, please
  - a. Find a substitute, and
  - b. Inform the scheduling coordinator of the substitutions
2. On your scheduled date and Mass time, prepare ahead of time,
  - a. Dress appropriately. When serving at Mass, altar servers wear an alb.
  - b. Keep you face clean and your hair neatly combed. If you have long hair, please tie it that none of it may catch the flame of candles.
  - c. Refrain from wearing flip flops or heels when serving at Mass.

## **Before the Mass**

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass starts.
- Offer a prayer before you begin your ministry.
- Put on an alb (white vestment). Choose one that is long enough to touch the top of your shoes. The alb is a sacred vestment – treat it as such. Wear a cincture (cord) around your waist. So as not to trip on it, make sure none of its ends touch the floor.
- Put on your nametag.
- Check the following:
  - Water cruet, bowl with water and towel on the credence table
  - Open hymnal to Opening Hymn and place it on your chair.
  - Make sure that the gifts of bread and wine are on the offertory table.
  - The level of oil in the two processional candles. If you need to add more oil, use the refilling bottle found in the Sacristy cupboard.
- Light the two candles on the sides of the altar, and the two processional candles.
  - During the Ordinary Time, there is no need to light the six candles by the tabernacle.
  - If there is Baptism at the Mass you are serving, please light the Paschal Candle.
- Whenever crossing the tabernacle, please bow your head as a sign of respect to the Blessed Sacrament. There is no need to do this during the Mass because the liturgical action takes place at the ambo and the altar.
- Five minutes before Mass starts, using the side aisles, carry the two processional candles to the back of the church.

## **During the Introductory Rites**

- As the Opening Hymn begins, follow the Cross bearer and walk reverently towards the altar.
- As you reach the foot of the sanctuary, slightly bow your head as a sign of reverence to the altar. There is no need to wait for the other ministers. After bowing, come up the altar and place the two processional candles on the first step of the *reredo*, on the side where you are seated. Then, proceed to the seats assigned to you. Refrain from sitting on the deacon's chair when he is not present.
- When you hear the priest say, "Let us pray," take this as a cue to step forward to hold the Roman Missal. The priest will then pray the Collect. Hold the book until the people respond with "Amen," and then, close the book and return it to the priest.
  - The Collect is prayed after the Gloria.
  - Note, however, that during Advent and Lent, we do not recite or sing the Gloria.

### **During the Liturgy of the Word**

- As the readings are proclaimed and the homily is given, remain seated, with your hands resting on your lap. Participate in the responses.

### **During the Preparation of the Gifts**

- As the ushers begin to take the collection, altar servers prepare the altar by
  - Removing the clear plastic book holder from the altar
  - Lay the corporal on the altar with the cross towards you. Place the corporal as close as possible to the microphone, without touching it so as to avoid creating noise.
  - Place the Roman Missal in the center of the altar, towards you, close to the edge of the altar.
  - Place the three chalices on the right side of the altar, with three purificators next to them.
  - Once the altar is set, take the two processional candles and, using the side aisles, proceed to the back of the church.
  - Once the gift bearers are ready, process reverently to the altar. Return the processional candles to their place.
  - Bring the water cruet to the deacon, if present, or to the priest, who will add water to the wine. Wait for the water cruet to be returned to you and put it back on the credence table.
  - Bring the bowl with water and towel to the priest for handwashing. When done, place them back to the credence table and return your seats.
    - With two altar servers, one may carry the bowl, the other, the towel.
    - With one altar server, the towel is folded over the forearm and carry the bowl with both hands.

### **During the Liturgy of the Eucharist**

- Participate in the responses and follow the gestures done by the congregation.
  - When kneeling, use the cushions that are found under your seats.
- You may ring the bells during –
  - the *Epiclesis*, the calling of the Holy Spirit. Your cue is when the priest places his hands over the gifts of bread and wine.
  - the *showing of the consecrated host and, then, of the consecrated wine* to the people.
- During the Lord's Prayer, you need not hold the hands of the priest.

- During the Sign of Peace, offer the sign of peace with those in the sanctuary. After offering the sign of peace, bring one empty ciborium to the altar on the left side of the altar.
- During Communion, receive communion with the communion ministers from the priest and/or deacon, if present.
  - While the congregation is receiving Communion, you may remove the Roman Missal from the altar. Keep the corporal on the altar, and the cover of the ciborium, if brought to the altar.
  - Be seated and offer a prayer of thanksgiving.
- After Communion, the priest will be gathering leftover hosts and will be consuming leftover wine, if any. Since the purification of the sacred vessels takes place after Mass, please assist in bringing the empty chalices, patens, pyxes and the corporal to the credence table or the sacarium in the sacristy.

### **During the Concluding Rites**

- After a moment of silence after communion, the priest stands for the Prayer after Communion. You will hear him inviting the congregation with, “Let us pray.” Stand and proceed to hold the Roman Missal. As the congregation responds with “Amen,” close the Roman Missal and return it to the priest. And you return to your seat.
  - On certain occasions, there may be a solemn blessing. Be attentive as you may be asked by the priest to keep holding the Roman Missal during the blessing.
- When the priest moves towards the altar to kiss it, pick up the processional candles and take your position in front of the altar.
- When the priest bows before the altar, slightly bow before the altar.
- Turn around and, walking reverently, follow the Cross bearer.

### **After Mass**

- Extinguish the processional candles and place them back in the sanctuary.
- Help extinguish the two side altar candles.
  - Use the candlelighter to extinguish the flame. Blowing the flame may cause wax to spill on the carpet or altar cloth.
- Hang the alb and cincture neatly in the closet.

### **Other Holy Days and Liturgical Celebrations when you may serve at Mass**

(Please check the bulletin for volunteer opportunities)

1. Holy Days of Obligation
  - a. Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God – January 1<sup>st</sup>
  - b. Ascension of Our Lord – 40 Days after Easter

- c. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – August 15<sup>th</sup>
  - d. All Saints Day – November 1<sup>st</sup>
  - e. Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception – December 8<sup>th</sup>
  - f. Christmas – December 25<sup>th</sup>
2. Holy Week
- a. Holy Thursday – 3 days before Easter Sunday
  - b. Good Friday – 2 days before Easter Sunday
  - c. Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday Masses
3. Other Holy Days
- a. Ash Wednesday – First Day of Lent (usually in February or March)
  - b. All Souls Day – November 2<sup>nd</sup>
4. Weddings and Funerals (particularly during the summer months when; if interested submit your name to Father Edison)

Updated July 17, 2016