



Altar Server
Information Packet

**OLMC Altar Server
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Thank you for your service in the Altar Server Ministry. The community of Our Lady Mt. Carmel is grateful for both your and your parents' service to the Church.

It is important to realize that you're a very special minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. The entire community of Our Lady Mt. Carmel is depending on you to perform your duties as an Altar Server with dignity and reverence.

It is also important for your parents to realize that they play an important part in the ministry as well. They support you in your service by helping to ensure that you are properly dressed, arrive for your assignment on time and taken home after you complete your assignment. Parents should also assist in finding you a substitute if you are unable to fulfill your assignment at any time.

This document includes all the information needed to fulfill your role as an Altar Server. Please read and become familiar with the Altar Server Information Packet. With this information, you will have an understanding of the importance of your role during the Mass.

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Altar Server Prayers

A Server's Prayer

Loving Father, creator of the universe, you call your people to worship, to be with you and with one another at Mass. I thank you for having called me to assist others in their prayer to you. May I be worthy of the trust placed in me and through my example and service bring others closer to you. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

Before Mass

Oh Jesus, my King and Lord, by the grace of the heavenly Father and the power of the Holy Spirit, guide me in all righteousness as I serve You today at the Altar so I may be always worthy of Your presence. If I happen to make an error, may it be a lesson so my service will be perfect tomorrow. Jesus, I love you with all my heart. Amen.

Prayer to St. John Berchmans, Patron of Altar Boys

Dear St. 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 servers imitate you in their service at Eucharistic celebrations as well as in their conduct with others. Amen.

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The Altar Server has responsibilities before, during and after the Mass. These responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Do well in school.
- (2) Be respectful and obedient to parents, guardians and others of authority.
- (3) Learn the prayers and responses at Mass.
- (4) Being reverent at Mass and not a distraction.
- (5) Fulfill your assignments or find a substitute.
- (6) Attend all training sessions.
- (7) Praying. Prayer is the most important job of any minister. A simple “Our Father” or “Hail Mary” are always good prayers for starters.

The information in this packet is designed to help the servers understand their role. This packet is divided into six sections:

- (1) Roles,
- (2) What to do before Mass,
- (3) What to do during Mass, and
- (4) What to do after Mass,
- (5) Order of the Mass,
- (6) Definitions for Servers to Memorize.

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The Various Roles for Altars Servers

There are three (3) roles for Altar Servers:

- Cross Bearer
- Book Bearer
- Acolyte

Cross Bearer:

- ✚ Carries the Cross,
- ✚ Sits on the chair next to the lector.
- ✚ Helps setting up the altar with the chalices and purificators during announcements,
- ✚ Accepts the collection basket during the preparation of the gifts,
- ✚ Helps at the offertory by taking up the collection basket or one of the gifts.

Book Bearer:

- ✚ Presents the Sacramentary to the Priest when he says "Let us Pray" in the Liturgy of the Word and during the Closing Rite,
- ✚ Brings the Sacramentary to the Altar during preparation of gifts,
- ✚ Presents the water cruet to the priest during the offertory,
- ✚ Handles the water cruet and the Lavabo Dish during the washing of the hands,
- ✚ Removes the Sacramentary from the Altar during the distribution of Holy Communion.

Acolyte:

- ✚ Assists the priest by carrying the Holy Water Bucket and Aspergillum for the priest when in use,
- ✚ Helps prepare the Altar during the preparation of gifts by opening the corporal, and assists with placing the chalices on the altar,
- ✚ Accepts the wine cruet from the priest during the presentation of gifts,
- ✚ Holds the towel during the washing of hands of the priest.

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Unless otherwise arranged by the priest, assignments will be as follows:

- When 3 servers are assigned or shows for assignment,
 - Server 1 will be the cross bearer,
 - Server 2 will be the book bearer,
 - Server 3 will be the acolyte and if needed thurifer.
- When 2 servers are assigned or shows for assignment,
 - Server 1 will be the cross bearer, acolyte and if needed thurifer,
 - Server 2 will be the book bearer.
- When 1 server is assigned or shows for assignment, this server assumes all positions and duties. Do not be afraid to ask for help from the priest and the lector if there is one present at your Mass.

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Before Mass:

Dress Code:

All servers, including substitute servers, must be dressed properly. OLMC School students are allowed to wear shorts and sneakers if it is a gym day. Otherwise, the dress code for all Masses (weekend, weekday, Holyday or special occasions) is:

- * Dress pants, or skirt/dress (no shorts or mini-skirts)
- * Dress shoes (no sneakers)
- * No T-shirts
- * No excessive make up or strange finger nail polish

Arrival:

All servers need to arrive at the server's sacristy:

- At least 15 minutes prior to Mass,
- Come thru the Sanctuary (genuflect to the tabernacle and bow to the altar) or enter through the lower church,
- Sign the sign-in sheet in the server's sacristy to let us know that you are present.
- Vest properly in a black cassock and white surplis.

Set up before Mass:

About 10 minutes before Mass, (when the altar server is vested), the servers can decide among themselves, who is to light the candles.

- Light all candles at the altar, the 2 candles at the tabernacle and during Easter season, and the Pascal candle.
- Be sure the sanctuary is properly set up and that you know where everything is located. This includes the sacramentary, chalices, lavabo bowl, cruets, and corporal.
- Go QUIETLY to the vestibule (or where ever the Mass is to begin) and wait quietly for the opening procession.

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During Mass:

Entrance Procession

- Line up for the opening procession as follows:
 - Cross Bearer,
 - Thurifer (if assigned), Thurifer should be carrying the thurible and the incense boat.
 - Acolyte and Book Bearer (Acolyte on the left and Book Bearer on the right) should process to the altar with hands folded.
 - Lector,
 - Deacon,
 - Priest

When the music begins, process to the altar reverently and at a normal pace. This is not a race. Please, do not create too much distance between you and the priest.

When you reach the altar, line up and await the priest. The cross bearer and the acolyte should line up on the left and the book bearer should line up on the right of the altar, allowing room in the middle for the lector, deacon and the priest.



Cross Acolyte Lector Priest Deacon Book Bearer
Bearer

Bow to the altar with the priest, and go to your seats by the credence table. Book Bearer should immediately retrieve the sacramentary and be prepared for his/her cue.

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Liturgy of the Word

When the priest says “Let us Pray”, the book bearer proceeds to the priest and presents the sacramentary to the priest. Hold your hands out in a manner to allow yourself to hold the book for the priest to read. If the priest takes the book from you and holds the book himself, remain with hands folded until the priest completes the prayer, then accept the sacramentary from the priest, and return to your seat. All servers may be seated, remain attentive and quiet for the Liturgy of the Word. Stand during the reading of the Gospel and be seated again for the homily.

Stand for the Creed and the Prayer of the Faithful.

During the reading of the announcements, prepare the Altar. The Book Bearer places the Sacramentary on the left side of the Altar, the Acolyte opens the corporal in the center of the altar and assists with the placement of the chalices, the cross bearer assists with the placement of the chalices and the purificators. Do not leave the water cruet on the Altar.

Presentation of the gifts:

- Cross Bearer and Acolyte go to the foot of sanctuary to help receive the gifts from the parishioners.
- Cross Bearer accepts the collection basket and places it at the foot of the altar.
- Acolyte accepts the wine decanter from the priest, proceeds to the credence table and meets the book bearer.
- Book Bearer picks up the water cruet and joins the acolyte at the foot of the altar.
- When the priest is ready for the wine and water, both the book bearer and the acolyte step up to the 1st step from the top and presents the wine decanter to the priest. Then presents the water cruet to the priest. Wait for the priest to give both the water cruet and the wine decanter back and together turn around and proceed to the credence table.

Washing of the Hands:

- The acolyte places the wine decanter on the credence table and picks up the finger towel.
- The book bearer keeps the water cruet and picks up the lavabo dish.
- Together both return to the 1st step from the top landing and wait for the priest to come for the washing of the hands. The book bearer pours water over the priest hands and the acolyte presents the finger towel for drying the hands. Wait for the priest to hand back the towel and together place your items on the credence table.
- All proceed to the bottom step and pass out the kneeling pads. Remain standing with hands folded.

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Eucharistic Prayer:

- When the priest and congregation complete the “Holy, Holy, Holy”, kneel on the kneeling pads.
- Keep hands folded in a prayerful manner.
- When the priest holds up the host and cup together and completes the “Thru Him, With Him” and all recite “Amen!”, stand, return the kneeling pads to the 1st step along side the drapes.
- Recite the “Our Father” with the congregation and the priest.
- When the priest offers you the sign of peace, return the sign to him and the lector.
- Form a line at the credence table and be ready to receive communion.
- The priest will give you the host and 1 of the Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers will present you with the cup. After they state to you “Body of Christ” or “Blood of Christ”, respond “**Amen.**” Then step back.
- When all ministers have left the altar and begin distributing communion to the congregation, the book bearer removes the sacramentary from the altar and keeps it at his/her chair. The acolyte folds the corporal and places it on the credence table; however, if one of the sacred vessels is still sitting on the corporal, leave it for the Eucharistic Minister or Priest to remove. Do not move any of the sacred vessels.
- Take you seat and be reverent through out the rest of the distribution of communion.

Closing Rite:

- When the priest says “Let us pray”, the book bearer presents the sacramentary to the Priest. Perform the same actions that were performed during the Opening Rite.
- The other servers stand with hands folded.
- After the priest says “Go in Peace”, the book bearer returns the sacramentary to its original place below the credence table.
- Cross Bearer removes the cross from its stand.
- All servers take their place in front of the altar just like they did during the Opening Rite.
- Bow with the priest and process out in the same manner that you processed in during the opening procession. Remember your pace. Even though that is the closing of the mass it is still not a race. Use a reverent pace.

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After Mass:

Proceed to the servers' sacristy using either the side aisle or the lower church.

Cross Bearer takes the cross back to the altar and places it back into the stand.

The Acolyte uses the bell and torch to extinguish the candles.

All servers are responsible for placing their cassocks and surpluses back on the proper hangers and hanging these items in the servers' closet neatly and organized.

Remember leave the sacristy in better shape than you found it. If something is out of place, please clean it up and place the article in its proper place. This is a common courtesy to your fellow servers and the church.

Order of the Mass

I. Introductory Rite

A. Processional

B. Entrance Song – It gathers us all together into 1 family of believers.

C. Greeting – We make the sign of the cross and bless ourselves.

The priest will extend his hand and say *“May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”*

We all respond **“and also with you”**

D. Penitential Rite – We all recognize our sins and ask forgiveness.

We then may recite the Act of Contrition:

“I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do: and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord, our God.”

Priest: “May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.”

Response; **“Amen.”**

Then the Priest or deacon will say *“Lord Jesus Christ, you came to heal the contrite. Lord have mercy.”*

Response **“Lord have mercy.”**

Priest *“Christ Jesus, you are the Son of God and the Son of Mary. Christ have mercy.”*

Response **“Christ have mercy.”**

Priest *“Lord Jesus Christ, through your love do we come to know how much we are loved. Lord have mercy.”*

Response **“Lord have mercy.”**

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Priest “*May Almighty God have mercy on us and bring us to everlasting life.*”

Response “**Amen!**”

Then everyone recites or sings “**Glory to God in the Highest, and peace to His people on earth. Lord God, Heavenly King, Almighty God and Father, we worship You, we give you thanks, we praise You for Your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us; You are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**”

(Note: this is not sung or said during Advent or Lent.)

E. Opening Prayer – Priest “*Let us Pray.*” Book Bearer’s cue to take the Sacramentary to the priest.

II. Liturgy of the Word

A. First Reading – Reading from Old Testament. At the completion of the reading:

Lector “*The Word of the Lord.*”

Response “**Thanks be to God.**”

B. Responsorial Psalm – Normally sung by cantor. Read by the Lector if there is no cantor. Listen to response and respond with the congregation.

C. Second Reading – Reading from New Testament. At the completion of the reading:

Lector “*The Word of the Lord.*”

Response “**Thanks be to God.**”

D. Gospel Acclamation – This is the “Alleluia”. This is sung; but, is omitted when there is no music.

E. Gospel – A reading from Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. At the beginning:

Priest “*The Lord be with you.*”

Response “**and also with you.**”

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Priest “*A reading from the Gospel from (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John).*”

Response **“Glory to you O Lord.”**

Priest reads the Gospel and concludes with “*The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Response – Sung or if no music **“Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”**

F. Homily – Priest thoughts to make the words of the Holy Scripture come alive for the day.

G. Profession of Faith

H. Prayer of the Faithful

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist

A. Preparation of the gifts – The altar is prepared, collection is taken, and the collection, wine and bread are brought by the people to the priest. The gifts are taken to the altar.

Priest “*Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.*”

Response **“Blessed be God forever.”**

Wine is then poured with a little water into the chalice (or wine decanter). Then the priest raises the chalice slightly:

Priest “*Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hand. It will become our spiritual drink.*”

Response **“Blessed be God forever.”**

B. Washing of hands – priest comes to the side of the altar to wash his hands. He returns to the center of the altar:

Priest “*Pray my brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.*”

Response **“May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.”**

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Priest – prays over the gifts from the prayer of the Church for the day.

Response **“Amen.”**

C. Preface – A specific prayer for the day that proceeds the Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest *“The Lord be with you.”*

Response **“and also with you.”**

Priest *“Lift up your hearts.”*

Response **“We have lifted them up to the Lord.”**

Priest *“Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.”*

Response **“It is right to give him thanks and praise.”**

D. Sanctus – at the completion of the Preface we all respond

Response **“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.”**

E. Eucharistic Prayer – The priest prays over the bread and wine and consecrates the bread and wine.

After consecrating the bread and wine and elevating both above the Altar (bread first, wine second), the priest will ask us to proclaim our faith.

Response is sung or if there is no music

“Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will rise again.”

F. Intercessions – Prayers for the whole world, Holy Father, our Bishops, clergy and all the faithful.

G. Great Amen – The priest raises the host and cup together and says:

“Thru him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever.”

Response **“Amen!”**

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IV. Communion Rite

A. Lord's Prayer – Everyone recites the Our Father

“Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done as earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Priest *“Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”*

Response **“For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.”**

B. Sign of Peace – The priest then prays to Jesus for peace for all his people and the church. He then says *“Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles; I leave you peace, my peace I give to you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live and reign forever and ever.*

Response **“Amen.”**

Priest *“The peace of the Lord be with you always.”*

Response **“And also with you.”**

Priest *“Let us offer each other a sign of peace.”*

Response: Offer the sign of peace to the priest and others on the altar.

C. Breaking of Bread – Priest breaks the large host and all say-

**“Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; grant us peace.”**

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D. Private Preparation – Priest prepares to receive communion. He genuflects, holds up the Body & Blood of Christ and proclaims

“This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.”

“Lord, I am not worthy to receive you; but, only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

The priest consumes the Body and Blood of Christ, then distributes to others in the sanctuary and then the congregation.

E. Period of Silence or Song – Song is sung at this time of if there is no music, there is a period of silence.

F. Prayer after Communion – Priest “Let us pray.”

He reads the prayer from the sacramentary and when he concludes –

Response **“Amen.”**

V. Concluding Rite

The priest extends the final greeting with *“The Lord be with you.”*

Response **“And also with you.”**

The priest will offer a blessing. The blessing may be something special but is normally *“May almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”*

Response **“Amen.”**

The deacon or priest will dismiss the congregation with *“The Mass is ended, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”*

Response **“Thanks be to God.”**

Everyone in the sanctuary then goes to their place at the center of the altar to process out.

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Definitions for Servers to Memorize:

Altar: The Sacred Table where sacrifice takes place

Boat and Incense: Holds scented rocks to make the smoke

Cassock: Black outfit for the servers

Chalice: The sacred cup for the Precious Blood

Chalice Pall: The cardboard square placed over the chalice and holds the corporal

Ciboria: Large Bowl or vessel for extra Consecrated Hosts

Credence Table: Table where all cruets are placed

Cruets: vessels holding water and wine

Finger Towel: Thick Cloth to dry the priest's hands after washing

Funeral Pall: The large white garment placed over the casket

Holy Water Bucket and Aspergillum: The bucket for the holy water and the stick with the ball on it used to bless people with holy water

Lavabo Dish: Bowl for washing the priest's hands

Lectionary: Book of Readings of Scripture

Paschal Candle: The large candle used for Baptisms and the Easter season

Paten: Flat plate or bowl that holds the host (or hosts) for communion

Purificator: The sacred cloth to wipe the Precious Body and Blood
(If dropped, get a new one)

Sacramentary: Book of Sacred Prayer

Sanctuary: The whole area for the altar, the tabernacle, seats and pulpit

Surplus: White outfit for the servers to be worn over the Cassock

Tabernacle: Place where the Blessed Sacrament (consecrated host) is kept for veneration.
Genuflect when passing the tabernacle.

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Thurible: The place where the hot coals are placed

Torch and Bell: The instrument for lighting and snuffing candles

Priest's Vestments:

Alb: White robe

Cincture: The chord used as a belt

Stole: The cloth placed over the priest's shoulders

Chasuble: The colored cloth that serves as the outer garment