

# Saint Edward Confessor Parish Altar Server Guidelines 2011 - 2012

*Dear Altar Server and Family,*

*Student altar servers at Saint Edward Confessor Parish assist the Priests and Deacons at Mass on Sunday, Holy Days of Obligation, and other Special Liturgies. Servers are an important and much appreciated part of our Liturgies. This ministry promotes a closer relationship with the ever-present Body of Christ in the lives of those who serve. The ministry of altar server can also enhance the worship of our faith community.*

*Altar service*

- ❖ *Is a ministry of the church*
- ❖ *Is about being of service to the church gathered together in prayer*
- ❖ *Is a way to learn more about liturgy and Catholic ritual*
- ❖ *Is like being on any other team – your effort counts in creating a prayerful spirit of worship for the community.*

**1. Introduction:** the following information is important. Please read it carefully. It clearly spells out the expectations and guidelines for all altar servers. We are so happy that you are willing to be a part of this ministry of service to the Lord and His people.

## **2. Expectations:**

- a) all servers are expected to be at Church ***at least 15 minutes*** before Mass begins.
- b) all servers are expected to **fulfill their assigned times to serve.**
- c) all servers are to **sign in** when you report to serve.
- d) all servers should check to see if there are 2 water cruets on the credence table and that the bells are in the proper location before Mass begins.
- e) all servers are expected to **find their own replacement** for an assigned Mass if they cannot make it for any reason. If you have exhausted all possible servers and cannot find a replacement ó you must notify Mr. Berman or Sr. Jackie. Any missed assignment without notification will be considered unexcused. Servers with more than two unexcused absences will be asked to review their record of service and their commitment to the ministry.
- f) all servers are expected to wear **“Sunday clothes”** when serving. Neither sneakers, flip flops, crocs or high heel shoes are considered acceptable serving attire.
- g) all servers are expected to **hang up their vestments** after mass.
- h) all servers are expected to **participate fully** in the liturgy. This includes **praying, singing and paying attention** to the priest who is celebrating the Mass.
- i) all servers are expected to **know and say** the appropriate responses throughout the Mass
- j) it would be greatly appreciated if servers would be willing to serve at **special liturgical functions** throughout the year. We hope that you will try to make yourself available when called upon.
- k) all servers will be ranked according to their experience:
  - Beginner
  - Server
  - Acolyte
  - Acolyte Captain\* - must be earned by recommendation & testing.

## **\*3. Altar Server “TEAM”**

A team of **three servers** is what is needed to serve a Mass. One Cross Bearer and two Candle Bearers. Although we expect servers to obtain substitutes when they are not able to serve, we are not always successful in obtaining 3 servers. We have begun to schedule a fourth server as an alternate. The alternate checks into the sacristy and waits to see if s/he is needed. If 3 servers show up, the alternate then returns to the assembly to sit with his/her family in church. ***The alternate does not become a fourth server.***

#### 4. Definitions & Expectations

##### a) Altar Servers:

1. **Beginner** ó 0 to 6 months in training
2. **Server** ó 6 to 12 months in training
3. **Acolyte** ó 12 months or more (and is proficient)
4. **Acolyte Captain** ó Proficient Leader

##### b) Altar Server Testing:

All positions will have the opportunity to move up to the next position by being tested every six months until they reach acolyte level. You may not remain at the Beginner or Server level. You must achieve the level of proficiency of an Acolyte. Acolyte Captains are for those who demonstrate leadership qualities and is not mandatory for everyone.

#### 5. Test – Beginner ó you must be able to identify them by name and tell us what they are used for in the liturgy.

*This is an oral examination given by Deacon Ray, Sr. Jackie and our more experienced servers.*

- **Ambry** ó the glass encased area in the church that displays the oil of catechumens, the oil of chrism and the oil for anointing the sick.
- **\*\*Sacramentary** ó the book containing the prayers said by the priest during the Mass. (will be replaced on the First Sunday of Advent 2011 and will be replaced by the **ROMAN MISSAL**.)
- **Lectionary** ó the book of Scriptures read at the Liturgy of the Word.
- **Book of Gospels** ó the book containing the Gospels which is carried in procession into Mass.
- **Sanctuary** ó the sacred space that is elevated before the congregation.
- **Sanctuary Lamp** ó the candle that marks the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle.
- **Sacristy** ó the room where the priest vests before Mass.
- **Vestments** ó special robes worn by priests, deacons and altar servers.
  - **Alb** ó white robe worn over street clothes by priests, deacons and altar servers.
  - **Cincture** ó cord used as a belt for the alb.
  - **Chasuble** ó colored vestment worn only by the priest (colors change to reflect the different liturgical seasons/feasts).
  - **Dalmatic** ó colored vestment worn only by the deacon.
  - **Pall** ó the large cloth that is used to cover the casket at a Mass of Christian Burial.
- **Altar** ó the table of the Lord in the sanctuary.
- **Altar Cloth** ó the tablecloth for the altar ó always white.
  - **Purificator** ó rectangular linen cloth used by the priest, deacon or eucharistic minister to purify the chalice. Used purificators must always be placed in the proper container for sacred cloths.
  - **Corporal** ó square white linen cloth (usually with a cross in the center) that is placed in the center of the altar to protect any particles of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus from falling onto the altar cloth. It is always folded and unfolded as to protect any particles from being lost.
  - **Finger towel** ó small white cloth used to dry the priest's fingers
- **Altar Vessels** ó sacred vessels used during the celebration of the liturgy
  - **Chalice** ó a cup made of semi-precious metal that is used by the priest/deacon/extraordinary ministers for the Precious Blood.
  - **Paten** ó a dish-like vessel that holds unconsecrated hosts and is brought forward during the presentation of gifts. It is usually used during the elevation/consecration
  - **Ciborium** ó a vessel made of semi-precious metal that contains the Body of Christ. It is used to distribute Eucharist and is also the receptacle for consecrated hosts in the tabernacle and a lid is placed on top of those that are of the stacking type.
  - **Tabernacle** ó the ornate receptacle used to place/store the Body of Christ.
  - **Ambo** ó the platform where the Word of God is proclaimed and the homily is preached (also called a pulpit).

- **Credence Table** ó a table off to one side of the sanctuary where vessels, cloths, and other items necessary for the liturgy are placed in preparation for Mass.
- **Bells** ó rung during the consecration of the Mass.
- **Paschal Candle** ó the large ornate candle used at funerals, baptisms, and from Holy Saturday (the Easter Vigil until Pentecost).
- **Processional Cross** ó the large cross carried in and out of the Mass (Entrance & Recessional).
- **Cruets** ó small pitcher-like vessels of water and wine for the Mass
- **Lavabo/Finger Bowl** ó small bowl for priest to wash hands/fingers during the Liturgy of the Eucharist
- **Thurible** ó container for burning incense
- **Thurifer** ó the title given to the server responsible for the thurible
- **Boat** ó the container for incense
- **Aspergillum** ó the holy water sprinkler

**6. Test – Server must be passed within six months of passing the Beginner’s test.**

- a) **Demonstrate** – knowledge of all of the above items
- b) **Demonstrate** – how to light and extinguish candles properly
- c) **Demonstrate** – how to set the altar correctly for Eucharistic celebration
- d) **Demonstrate** – when to bring the cruet of water for wine intinction
- e) **Demonstrate** – when to bring the finger bowl and towel for hand washing
- f) **Demonstrate** – when to ring the bells at the consecration
- g) **Demonstrate** – the appropriate responses said by the congregation during Mass

**7. Test – Acolyte – must be passed within six months of passing the Server test.**

- a) **Demonstrate** – that you know everything from the Beginner’s and Server’s test
- b) **Demonstrate** – that you can recite by heart öThe Gloria, Holy, Holy, Nicene Creed and the Our Father.ö
- c) **Demonstrate** – that you can perform your ministry well

**8. Test – Acolyte Captain – only for those acolytes that demonstrate the ability and desire to move into a leadership role. Captains will always be the first to be asked to serve in the special masses; i.e., Easter Vigil, Confirmation, First Holy Communions, etc. Captains will assist in the training of Beginners and Altar Servers.**

- a) **Demonstrate** – all of the above with proficiency
- b) **Demonstrate** – that you know and understand the various parts of the mass and can anticipate the needs of the priest during the celebration; i.e., the Procession; the Introductory Rite; the Penitential Rite; the Opening Prayer; the Liturgy of the Word; the Homily; the Profession of Faith; the General Intercessions; the Liturgy of the Eucharist; the Eucharistic Prayer; the Preface Acclamation; the Memorial Acclamation; the Communion Rite; the Prayer after Communion; the Concluding Rite, the Blessing and Dismissal. **(It’s all in the missalette!)**

*On behalf of our pastor, Father Thomas Fusco, Father Paul Kenney, Monsignor John Martin, Father Joe Fitzgerald, Deacon Jim Murphy, Deacon Tom Reilly, and any other of our visiting priests, we know that you will do your best to be an excellent and responsible server. Remember – it is truly a privilege to serve at the altar of the Lord. This ministry is a very good opportunity for you to stay close to Jesus.*

*Deacon Ray D’Alessio*

*Sr. Jackie Walsh, RSM*