

SAINT JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC CHURCH

ALTAR BOY MANUAL



BASICS WHEN SERVING

- Arrive at the church at least 15 minutes prior to Mass
- Wear khaki or black pants and brown or black dress shoes
- Ensure hair is neat and out of your face
-  • When standing and not holding anything, hold hands together with fingers straight
- When sitting, place your hands on your lap, one on each side
- When genuflecting, kneel with your right knee, touching the ground
- When crossing from one side of the altar to the other, walk in front of Father's chair and genuflect or bow when passing the tabernacle
- Remember, you are a very visible part of the Mass! Look reverent and attentive. Avoid slouching, stretching, yawning, playing with the paten, and any other action that may cause a distraction to the congregation or priest



Left

Congregation Perspective

Right

Marian side

St. Joseph side

A congregational perspective is used when referring to the right or left side of the altar throughout this manual. We approach Christ during the Mass, so right and left are from the perspective of all who approach the altar.

BEFORE MASS BEGINS

- Tell Father you are there and will be serving. Ask if he needs you to do anything or has any special instructions
- Initial the sign-in sheet or write your name in if substituting
- After putting on a cassock and surplice
 - light the altar candles
 - make sure the gifts are on the credence table at the back of the church
 - bring crucifix to the back of the church
- If two or more are present, make sure the candles for the high altar are ready
- Genuflect to the tabernacle when passing
- During Mass, bow to the altar when passing
 - Tabernacle before and after mass is the focus
 - Altar is the focus during Mass

THE MASS

Procession

- Order of procession from the back of the church:
 - **Thurifer carrying a smoking thurible, if incense is being used**
 - **Crucifer (Cross bearer) leads (Instituted Acolyte or other server)**
 - **Candle bearers (if 4 servers)**
 - **Book holder (if no Acolyte is available)**
- Begin walking, slowly, when the congregation begins singing the first hymn
 - **Crucifer and book holder (Acolyte) move to the right side of the altar and stop, facing the altar**
 - **Candle bearers to the left side of the altar and stop, facing the altar**
 - **Father will stand in the middle**
 - **Book holder (Acolyte) genuflects with Father.** All others “nod.”
- Proceed to seats
 - **Crucifer places Crucifix in its stand**
 - **Book holder (Acolyte) prepares to bring the Roman Missal to Father for the opening prayer**
§ **If no book holder (Acolyte), the Crucifer fills this role**
 - **Bring the Missal to Father and hold up, standing slightly to the side so that Father can clearly see the congregation**
- After the opening prayer, all sit and the Mass continues with the Liturgy of the Word



Presentation of the Gifts

- After the Prayer of the Faithful
 - **Book bearer (Acolyte) places the Roman Missal and its stand on the altar**
 - § **Crucifer fills this role if no book bearer**
 - **One of the candle bearers places the chalice on the altar**
 - **The crucifer proceeds to the rear of the church with the Crucifix. If the Instituted Acolyte is serving as the crucifer then another server will need to fill this role.**
- Father walks to the front of the altar to receive the gifts
 - **Altar servers still on the altar follow and stand to the right side of Father**
 - **Crucifer leads the gift bearers to the altar and then returns the Crucifix to its stand**
 - **Father hands the gifts to the altar servers beside him and then returns to the altar**
 - § **Place the Ciborium on the altar**
 - § **Place the wine on the credence table**
 - § **If there is only one boy beside him, Father will take the Ciborium to the altar**



Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the gifts

- **The two servers on the left side of the altar**
 - **Unstop the wine and water**
 - **Each boy takes one cruet, left hand, handle facing out**
 - **Place right hand over your heart**
 - **Both boys proceed to the edge of the carpet on the altar**
- **After Father has taken the wine and water**
 - **Return to the credence table**
 - **The boy with the wine:**
 - § **Returns the wine cruet to the table and re-stops it**
 - § **Pick up the finger towel and holds it, unfolded, between the thumbs and fingers of both hands, held together with fingers straight**
 - **The boy with the water:**
 - § **Keeps the water cruet, holding it now by the handle**
 - § **Picks up small bowl from the credence table**
 - **Both boys return to the edge of the carpet on the altar as soon as possible**
 - **When Father returns**
 - § **The boy with the water cruet pours water over Father's hands and into the bowl**
 - § **Father will take the finger towel from the other boy**
 - **Hold hands folded and wait for Father to lay the finger towel back over them**
 - **Both boys return to the left side of the altar and return the finger towel, water cruet, and bowl to the credence table**



The Eucharistic Prayer

- All altar servers kneel
- **Bell ringer (left side of the altar) rings the bells:**
 - Once when Father holds his hands over the ciborium and chalice at the Epiclesis
 - Three times when he raises the consecrated host in the air
 - Three times when he raises the ciborium in the air after the consecration



The Sign of Peace and Distribution of Communion

- After the “Our Father” proceed to the edge of the carpet to exchange sign of peace with Father
 - Boys on the left side of the altar pick up patens
- After receiving, boys with the patens follow Father and Extraordinary Minister (Acolyte) to the front of the altar
 - Stand to Father’s left and the Extraordinary Minister’s (Acolyte’s) left
 - Hold the paten below the chin of each communicant, or under the communicant’s hands if not receiving on the tongue
 - Be certain the paten is level to the ground
- After communion
 - Place patens on the altar
 - Stand and wait at the edge of the carpet
 - All servers genuflect with Father after he places consecrated hosts in the tabernacle
 - One boy takes the cleaned patens and puts them away
 - § Kneel
 - One boy returns to the credence table, unstops the water, and immediately returns to the edge of the carpet
 - § Hold the water cruet by the handle
 - § Free hand over chest
 - Pour water into ciborium or chalice when Father returns
 - § Return water cruet to credence table
 - § Proceed to the edge of the carpet to retrieve the ciborium
 - § Take the ciborium from the altar and place it on the credence table
- Father returns to his seat
 - Book bearer (Acolyte) retrieves the Roman Missal from the altar
 - One altar boy from the left takes the chalice from the altar and places it on the credence table
 - All boys quietly take their seats

Closing prayer and Recession

- Father rises and says "Let us Pray"
 - **Book bearer (Acolyte) brings the Roman Missal to Father for closing prayer**
 - **All stand**
- Father proceeds to the altar and bows
- **Two candle bearers retrieve candles from high altar**
 - **Follow Father to the front of the altar and stand, candle bearers to Father's left, others to Father's right**
- **Crucifer retrieves the Crucifix**
 - **Follow Father to the front of the altar and stand directly behind him, two pews back**
- **All servers but the crucifer and candle bearers genuflect with Father**
- Turn around and slowly walk to the back of the church
 - **Crucifer first**
 - **Candle bearers**
 - **Book bearer (Acolyte)**
 - **Father**

AFTER MASS

- **Return Crucifix to its stand**
- **Return cruets, purificator, ciborium to sacristy**
- **Snuff out candles**
 - **If candles are almost gone, check with Father to see if he wants them replaced**
- If there is another Mass during the day
 - Refill cruets with water and wine
 - Refill ciborium with hosts and place on table at back of church
 - Change linens on the chalice
 - § Place chalice on the credence table
 - § Place clean finger towel on credence table
- Ask Father if there is anything else he needs you to do
- Once finished, place your cassock and surplice on hangars and hang them up



ITEMS USED AT MASS



Roman Missal

Contains the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion, and solemn blessings. Eucharistic prayers and prefaces for all of the masses including most special occasions.



Lectionary

Contains the scripture readings for Mass.



Chalice

The large cup used at Mass used to hold the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ.



Ciborium

The vessel used to hold the Hosts which will be used for communion and to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.



Paten

Holds the bread which becomes the Body of Christ.



Communion Paten

Held under the communicant to ensure the Eucharist does not fall to the floor.



Corporal

A white linen cloth on which are placed the vessels containing the bread and wine during Mass which will become the Body and Blood of Christ.



Pall

The stiff, square, white cover that is placed over the paten when it is on the chalice.



Purificator

A white cloth used to cleanse the chalice. It resembles a napkin.



Finger Towel

A white cloth used to cleanse father's hands prior to the Eucharistic prayer



Candle Snuffer

Used to extinguish the candles.



Cassock

Garment worn by altar boys.



Surplice

White vestment worn over the cassock by altar boys.



Cruets

Glass containers for holding altar wine and water.



Monstrance

Used for exposition of the Holy Eucharist.



Thurible

A censer which holds the incense.



Thurible on stand

Stand on which the thurible hangs.