

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALTAR SERVER

This ministry requires participants who are mature and responsible. Remember first and foremost that assisting at Mass as an Altar Server is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, the following qualifications must be met to become an Altar Server at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton:

- Member of SEAS Parish
- Received their First Holy Communion
- Begun the 4th Grade
- Know the prayers and responses of the Mass thoroughly so as to fully participate
- Read and follow the Altar Server Guidelines.

An Altar Server assists the priest and deacon during Mass. In order to assist properly in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, a Server must possess and exhibit reverence at all times. This attribute is expressed at all times by having your hands folded in prayer, sitting or standing straight with good posture. It is important that Servers are always aware that they are in the presence of God: both by virtue of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, and the fact that the altar is the sacred place which carries the sacrifice of our Lord, Jesus Christ, at every consecration. Servers should always make time to pray before serving, in preparation for their duties, asking for God's grace to help them faithfully assist in the Mass.

If you meet the above qualifications and wish to become an Altar Server please contact Mrs. Candy Warner at [cwarner@seascc.org](mailto:cwarner@seascc.org) or call (817) 431-3176

### EXPERIENCED SERVERS

Experienced Servers shall be selected by the Pastor to serve as Master of Ceremony (MC). They will be paired with new Servers to act as role models and guides.

They also will receive special training to serve at weddings and funerals.

Serving at a funeral is a rewarding experience because it brings comfort to the grieving family. If chosen to be a MC, the letters "MC" will appear next to your name on the Server list.

### SIGNING IN

If you are scheduled to serve,

**YOU MUST ARRIVE AT LEAST 20 MINUTES BEFORE MASS BEGINS.**

Upon entering the Church, go immediately to the sign-in book and write your name in the "Altar Server" column; then go into the Usher's Room and get vested. If you are not scheduled to serve, but wish to do so as a substitute, please check with Mrs. Warner or the Mass Captain before signing in; you may have to wait for a few minutes to allow the scheduled Servers a chance to show up. If you are late and a substitute has already been allowed to get vested in your place, the substitute will serve. This policy is to encourage everyone to be on time and prevent any last-minute chaos. If you are attending Mass with your family and you notice that there are only one or two Servers assisting the priest, notify Mrs. Warner or the Mass Captain at the back of the Church and get vested. Proceed up the right side of the sanctuary, bowing to the altar, enter through the Sacristy door, and take your position on the altar.

## **DRESS**

A prime example of reverence is being well-groomed and wearing the appropriate clothing when serving. Yes, even though you'll be wearing a cassock and surplice over your "street clothes," dress is very important. Servers at SEAS will observe the following Dress Code:

- Well groomed – hair neatly styled, hands and nails clean, smiling faces ☩
- Neatly dressed - long, dark dress pants are preferred; clean, "non-distressed" blue jeans are acceptable. NO shorts, NO faded, torn or baggy blue jeans.
- Dark (black or brown) dress shoes or boots are preferred; they should be clean and polished. Athletic shoes are acceptable so long as they are a modest style, clean and in good repair. NO soccer shoes, sandals or "flip-flops."

## **ALTAR SERVER CASSOCKS & SURPLICES**

Wearing the proper cassock & surplice size is the key not only to "looking good" but also to performing your duties safely and efficiently.

The specific size of the cassock or surplice is noted in the form of a two-letter code (CE, DF, etc.). The first letter relates to the chest size, the second letter to the length. A properly fitting cassock should have a hemline around the ankles, with the sleeves ending at the wrists. If the hemline is too long you run the risk of tripping; if it is too short, the resulting fit will be a distraction to the congregation. Take the time to find a cassock which fits you properly, and remember the letter code on the size tag for your future use. If you can't find a cassock which ends exactly at your ankles, opt for the next size shorter – remember, "Safety First."

The proper combination of cassock & surplice should find the surplice sleeves ending about the same length as the cassock sleeves. In this case, 'shorter' is better than 'longer' – a bit of red of the cassock sleeve showing is perfectly acceptable.

Always check the fit in the mirror before leaving the Usher's Room, as you may have grown and need a bigger size; take the time to do a "buddy check" with your fellow Servers, as they may see something not fitting properly on you, and vice versa.

When Mass is completed, hang your cassock and surplice on separate hangers neatly on the rack; this will make it easier for the next Servers to find their appropriate sizes. There is a step stool near the rack to aid the shorter Servers, if needed.

**Acolyte and Altar Server**  
**Ministry instructions and guidelines for Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton**  
***Effective Date: 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, January 22, 2017***

Order of Procession dependent upon number of Servers:

Number of Servers: 5 maximum per Mass, unless the celebrant deems otherwise.

Masses with incense may add 2 additional servers (thurifer and boat).

Masses with the bishop may add 2 additional servers for miter and crosier.

Number of Acolytes: Dependent upon availability and solemnity, but for solemn Masses, a minimum of 2 acolytes are required.

Types of processions depend upon number of Acolytes and Servers.

A full procession including incense would have 7 servers:

They shall be in the following order:

1. Incense bearer, boat bearer,
2. Cross bearer between the 2 candle bearers,
3. 2 servers side by side
4. The acolytes,
5. Book of the Gospel,
6. Concelebrating Priest, and Celebrant with deacon to the celebrant's right.

A procession with 5 servers would remove the incense bearer and boat bearer.

A procession with 4 servers would remove one of 2 side by side servers in the procession or  
An acolyte may carry the cross in place of a server.

A procession with 3 servers would remove the 2 side by side servers or  
An acolyte may carry the cross in place of a server, and a server would follow in procession  
behind the cross and candle bearers.

A procession with 2 servers would not include a procession with candles or  
An acolyte may carry the cross with the 2 servers as candle bearers.

A procession with 1 server would only include the cross or  
An acolyte may carry the cross with the server following behind.

## **Preparation before Mass and Location of items:**

- The cross stand and candle stands need to be placed in the nook which has the door to the confessional. Three chairs along the back wall also need to be placed facing the assembled.
  - One chair facing inward needs to be placed on the end of the wall of the confessional so that an acolyte may sit there.
  - The presider's chair and two deacon chairs should be in view of all and facing towards the front doors of the church. To the right of the presider's chair and between the deacon's chair, there should be a small table to hold the small Roman Missal, Prayers of the Faithful, Mass intentions, and hymnals.
  - On the working sacristy side, there should be the credence table (May be multiple levels due to the large number of vessels), Two chairs facing the assembled, and one chair facing inward on the short wall for the acolyte. If we have incense, then two chairs will be placed next to this one with the incense stand placed on the step below behind the chairs.
  - If we have additional acolytes beyond two, then their chairs on placed by the acolyte on the Marian side.
  - The Sanctus bells are placed on the Marian side steps in clear view of the altar. The kneeler cushions should also be placed on the first step from the top for the acolyte and servers to use.
  - On the Joseph side, the kneeler cushions should be placed on the first step from the top so that the servers and acolytes may have a clear view of the action occurring on the altar.
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## **Entrance Procession:**

In order, according to the previous directions, the ministers line up inside the doors of the church. Once the assembled begin to sing, the first minister begins the procession. Once the minister arrives at the sanctuary, if he has anything in his hands, he bows his head only. Then he proceeds into the sanctuary to take his place next to his seat with the following exceptions.

- The incense and boat bearers go to the back corner near the altar on the Marian side so that the celebrant may incense the altar. Once incensation has been completed, the servers receive the thurible from the deacon and proceed to the Joseph side next to the working sacristy and place the boat and thurible in their appropriate places. Then they return to stand near their seats.
- The cross and candle bearers process into the church with the candles bears next to the cross bear. When they reach the sanctuary, they all head bow, and then the cross bearer leads them up the steps.

- The cross and candle bearers move to the Marian side and pass between the steps of the sanctuary and the presider's chair to the candle and cross stands. They will place the cross and candles in their stands, then move to their chairs on the Joseph side.

If a minister does not have anything in his hands, then as he approaches the sanctuary, he stops, genuflects, and enters the sanctuary and goes to his place.

### **Communion Procession:**

After the celebrant has self-communicated, he will then distribute communion to the deacons. The acolytes and servers will then process to the priest and deacon to receive communion (Please remember to make a sign of reverence before receiving communion. If you kneel, no other sign of reverence is required).

If there is no deacon, an acolyte will take the place of the deacon for the distribution of communion to the servers and acolytes. After receiving communion, the servers will return to their kneelers until needed.

Acolytes will have other duties at this time.

Once the Ordinary and Extraordinary ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion begin to return, the altar servers will assist the acolyte in carrying the purified or unpurified vessels back to the working sacristy.

They should not be bringing vessels to the altar from the Extraordinary ministers.

### **Recessional Procession:**

After the deacon/celebrant gives the dismissal, the servers and acolytes move to line up for the recessional once the music starts. They proceed up the center aisle in the same order in which they processed in. Then they turn and face the altar.

The priest and deacon(s) will approach the altar, reverence it, and then proceed down to the entrance of the sanctuary.

Once there, they will genuflect to the altar. When the celebrant genuflects, all other ministers will also genuflect or give a head bow if they have something in their hands. As the celebrant turns to recess out of the church in procession, all other ministers turn and process out.

### **Responsibilities of servers during the Mass:**

Each server will have particular responsibilities and either the head server or acolyte will assist in the execution of these duties at the appropriate times.

### **Signs of reverence:**

After making the appropriate sign of reverence on entering the sanctuary, there are no other signs of reverence made to the tabernacle. All attention is to the ambo and the altar with the altar taking prime importance. Any passing in front of the altar requires a profound bow, which means bowing from the waist. Passing behind the altar should at least be a head bow. If the minister has something in his hands, he makes a head bow.

### **At the Sanctus:**

When the assembled begin to sing the Sanctus, the acolytes and servers will move to either the Marian or Joseph side of the altar in front of the kneeling pads. When the assembled kneel, the acolytes and servers will also kneel.

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### **Incense and boat bearers**

The incense and boat bearers are responsible for maintaining the charcoal in the thurible. They are to sit on the Joseph or sacristy side of the sanctuary next to the acolyte. At the entrance procession, they go to the back Marian side of the altar and wait for the deacon and priest to reverence the altar. Then the priest will incense the altar. At the Gospel Procession, the bearers will approach the presider, who stands and fills the thurible.

After the priest blesses the deacon, then the bearers precede the deacon/priest to the front of the altar to pick up and display the Book of the Gospels. Then all proceed to the ambo with the bearers behind and to the right of the deacon/priest.

After the deacon announces the Gospel, he will turn take the thurible and incense the Book of the Gospel.

The deacon/priest will then give the thurible back to the bearer who remains in place until the end of the Gospel.

After this, he goes to the sacristy and puts 2 pieces of charcoal into the thurible. At the preparation of the gift, the bearers will get the thurible and boat and wait on the Joseph side of the altar and slightly to the rear. Before the hand washing, the priest will approach the bearers, charge the thurible and then incense the gifts, altar, and people is appropriate.

The priest will hand the thurible back to the bearer who then places the thurible and the boat on the stand. For the Eucharistic prayer, the bearers will kneel on the Joseph side of the sanctuary.

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### **Cross Bearer**

In addition to carry the cross in the entrance and recessional processions, the cross bearer will also be responsible for the Roman Missal. At the collect and prayer after communion, he will approach the presider's chair from behind and pick up the Missal from behind the chairs.

Then proceed to the right of the deacon's chair and position himself so that the celebrant of the deacon may open to the collect or prayer after communion.

The cross bearer may also hold the Prayers of the Faithful for the celebrant.

The cross bearer will set the Roman Missal, with stand, on the altar for preparation of the altar. He will also receive it after the communion procession ends.

The cross bearer will assist the celebrant and the deacon with the reception of the gifts.

For the Eucharistic prayer the bearer will kneel on the Marian side of the sanctuary. Once the communion process concludes, the servers will assist with bringing the purified and unpurified vessels to the working sacristy.

## **Candle Bearers**

When we have a solemn Gospel procession, the candle bearers will process with the incense bearer and then stand on either side of the ambo during the Gospel proclamation. The candle bearers will assist the celebrant and deacon in receiving the gifts. If there are fewer than 4 servers, then, after placing the candles in their stands, at least one candle bearer will sit on the Joseph side chairs in order to assist with the setting of the altar.

For the Eucharistic prayer, the bearer will kneel on the Marian side of the altar.

One of the bearers will ring the bells as follows: once immediately after the Calling down of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic prayer, and then three times when the celebrant shows the consecrated host and wine to the assembled.

There is no ringing of the bells when the priest genuflects. There is no ringing of the bells during the Sanctus, unless the Missal specifically specifies it on Feasts such as the Easter Vigil.

Once the communion process concludes, the servers will assist with bringing the purified and unpurified vessels to the working sacristy.

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## **Joseph Side servers**

The servers who sit on the Joseph side of the sanctuary next to the credence table will assist at the offertory rite to set the altar. They will work with the deacon of the altar and acolytes to prepare the altar. These servers will also bring the water to the deacon/celebrant for the mingling, and then also wash the celebrant's hands. The servers will kneel on the Joseph side of the sanctuary.

Once the communion process concludes, the servers will assist with bringing the purified and unpurified vessels to the working sacristy.

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## **Acolytes**

When we have two or more acolytes serving, then at least one acolyte will sit on either side to assist and direct the servers.

In the absence of a deacon, with the presider's permission, the acolyte may set the altar at the preparations of the altar.

Acolytes may **not** put the water into the chalices, this is reserved to the deacon or priest.

At the preparatory rites, on each side of the altar, there should be both patens and chalices with hosts and wine for the consecration and then distribution of Holy Communion.

The number on each side should correspond to the number of Ordinary and Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

See the document on the distribution of Holy Communion for more details on this communion procession and the acolytes' responsibilities.

The acolytes will kneel on the same side that they sit.

Once the communion process concludes, the servers will assist with bringing the purified and unpurified vessels to the working sacristy.