

# Altar Server Handbook

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish  
2014





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# THANK YOU!

Congratulations on choosing to join the Ministry of Altar Server!



Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish thanks you for answering the call to serve in this important role at Mass.

Altar serving is a privilege and responsibility which requires commitment, faithfulness, and a prayerful attitude.

This booklet contains guidelines for serving at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. Please read them, and refer to them if you are unsure about something. If you have questions, please ask a leader at Mass, or call beforehand from the names that are on the servers' schedule.

Thank you again for choosing to serve the Lord through your faith community!



## BEFORE LEAVING HOME

Before leaving your house:

- ✧ Pray to God, that you can be your best at Mass to serve with attention and reverence.
- ✧ Check your appearance, especially that your fingernails and shoes are clean. (Please don't wear flip-flops.)
- ✧ Please wear a light colored shirt so that it doesn't show through your alb.

# BEFORE MASS BEGINS

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- ✘ Please arrive at church at least 15 minutes before Mass is to begin.
- ✘ Check off your name from the schedule hanging on the bulletin board. If you are substituting for someone, write in your name.
- ✘ Pick out a properly sized alb to wear. If you need help getting robed, just ask. Please use the restroom if necessary before you put on an alb.
- ✘ Turn off any electronic devices. Do not ever check them at any time during Mass.
- ✘ Your responsibilities before Mass include:
  - ✘ Light the candles on the altar and the offertory table, and the processional candles.
  - ✘ During the Easter Season (from Easter Sunday through to Pentecost Sunday), also light the Paschal candle. Ask any taller person for help with this if you need it.
  - ✘ Place the chalice, tray of cups, water pitcher & basin, and towel on the credence table.
  - ✘ Place the stand for the Book of Gospels on the altar.
  - ✘ Place the three patens of hosts and the carafe of wine on the offertory table at the cross aisle.
  - ✘ Decide among you who will be the cross bearer and who the candle bearers.
    - ✘ The **cross bearer** will:
      - ✘ carry the cross in procession to and from the altar;
      - ✘ sit on the chair beside the priest during Mass;
      - ✘ hold the Missal open for the priest during the opening and closing prayers;
      - ✘ help the priest receive the gifts and prepare the altar.
    - ✘ The **candle bearers** will:
      - ✘ Carry the candles in procession to and from the altar;
      - ✘ Sit in the chairs in front of the credence table;
      - ✘ Help the priest to receive the gifts and prepare the altar.
  - ✘ Help the sacristan in any other way you are asked.
  - ✘ If we have a visiting priest, greet him and welcome him. Ask him or the sacristan if there is anything to be done differently from usual.
  - ✘ Wait in the Sacristy for group prayer before Mass.



# The ORDER of the MASS:

## The INTRODUCTORY RITES

### ENTRANCE:

Line up for the entrance procession:

The cross bearers and candle bearers,  
the Eucharist ministers,  
the readers, and  
the presider (the priest).

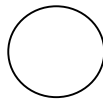
As you process in, walk slowly and reverently side by side.

Start to process when the singing begins with the opening hymn.

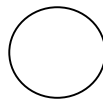
When you reach the altar, fan out to leave room for the priest to stand in the center.

**ALTAR**

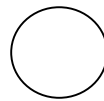
**Cross  
Bearer**



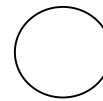
**Priest**



**Candle  
Bearer**



**Candle  
Bearer**



The priest will bow. Because you are holding the cross and candles, you do not, but you stand reverently while he bows.

Together you move upward.

The candle bearers should move to the left of the altar and place the candles on the credence table, then go to stand by your seats.

The cross bearer should move to the right of the altar to place the cross in its stand, then stand next to the priest.

## GREETING, PENITENTIAL ACT, GLORIA, COLLECT

At the conclusion of the opening song, the priest will:  
greet the assembly,  
lead us in a penitential rite (usually),  
call us all to sing the Gloria (except during Lent), and  
pray the **Opening Prayer** (called the **Collect**).

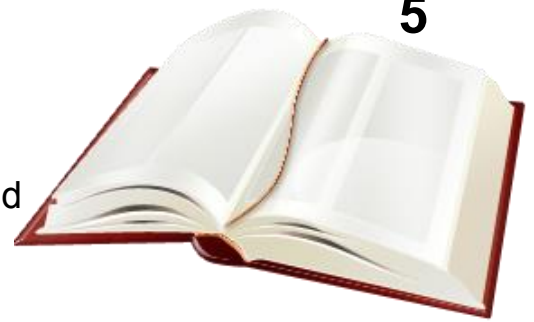
When the priest says "**Let us pray,**"  
the cross bearer picks up the missal  
and holds it in waiting.

The priest will open the book to the proper page.

Hold the book upright while the priest reads.

When he is done, place the book back on the stand near his chair.

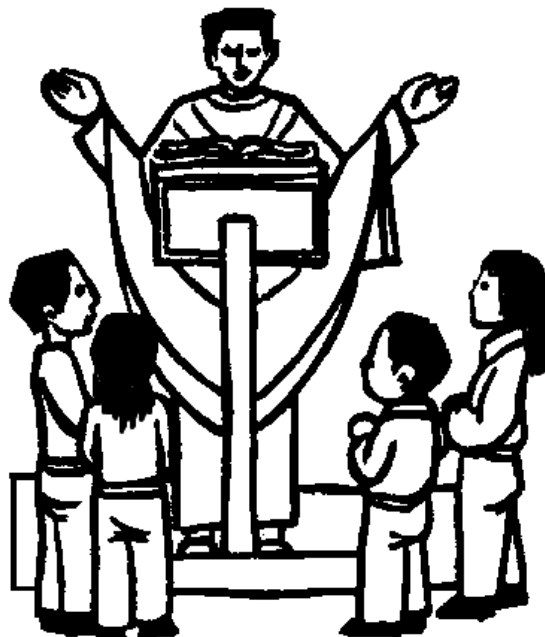
Return to your seat.



## The LITURGY of the WORD:

**FIRST READING, RESPONSORIAL PSALM, SECOND READING, GOSPEL  
ACCLAMATION, GOSPEL, HOMILY, DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS,  
PROFESSION OF FAITH** (the creed), **UNIVERSAL PRAYER** (the petitions)

- ✘ During the proclamation of the Word of God, sit and stand reverently, listen attentively with your hands folded, and respond with the assembly during the psalm and the gospel acclamation.
- ✘ During the homily, listen respectfully.
- ✘ When the creed is recited, recite it with the assembly.
- ✘ When the petitions are read, respond out loud with the assembly.



# The LITURGY of the EUCHARIST:

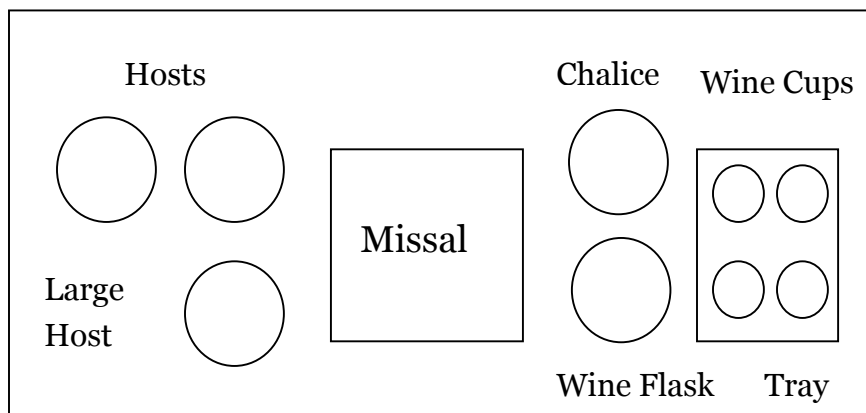
## PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION of the GIFTS

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### Preparing the Altar

When the offertory hymn begins:

- ✘ One server should remove the stand for the Book of the Gospels from the altar and place it on the credence table.
- ✘ Take the chalice, the Roman Missal, and the tray of cups and place them on the altar.



- ✘ When you are done, stand to the side of the altar.
- ✘ When the priest goes to the foot of the altar to receive the gifts, follow him and stand with him. The people will hand the gifts to the priest who will then hand them to you.
- ✘ When all the gifts are received and the priest has thanked the gift bearers, move together to place the gifts on the altar. If you carried the wine, remove the stopper from the vessel and place it on the credence table.
- ✘ Once the vessels are on the altar, go back to the credence table for the water, the bowl, and the towel – one for each of you. Go back to the altar and stand on the **top** step.
- ✘ The priest will request the water be brought forward and will pour it into the wine, then hand it back to the server, who then returns to stand next to the other servers.
- ✘ The priest will pour the wine into the chalice and cups and will hand the empty wine carafe to one of you. Place it on the credence table and return to the altar.



- ✘ After praying, the priest will hold his hands over the bowl, and the server with the water will pour it over his fingers. The other server will hand the priest the towel. He will dry his hands and hand the towel back.
- ✘ Return your vessels to the credence table and go to the side of the altar. Join in singing the rest of the offertory song.

### **The Eucharistic Prayer**

- ✘ **Kneel** (unless instructed differently) with reverence throughout the Preface and Eucharistic Prayer. Sing or say the responses at the proper times.

### **The Communion Rite**

- ✘ Stand up when the Our Father begins. Pray with everyone and exchange the Sign of Peace.
- ✘ When the Lamb of God begins, the Eucharist Ministers will proceed to the altar, so be aware to leave room for them.
- ✘ Stand to the side of the Eucharistic Ministers. The priest will distribute the Body of Christ to all ministers and servers. Hold the host until all are distributed. When the priest consumes his, you do the same.
- ✘ A Eucharistic minister will distribute the Blood of Christ. If you do not want to receive in this form, show the minister with a slight “no” move of your head.
- ✘ The priest and Eucharistic ministers will proceed to distribute communion.
- ✘ While communion is being distributed, remove all vessels from the credence table and altar. Take them to the sacristy and place them on the vestment table across from the sink. Never empty any consecrated wine down the sink. The communion ministers will consume it afterward.
- ✘ Return to the altar and stand by your chair facing the open tabernacle. Join in the singing of the communion song.
- ✘ When the tabernacle doors are closed, be seated for announcements.



# The CONCLUDING RITES:

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## Greeting

The priest will stand and say, "Let us pray."

- ✘ The cross bearer picks up the missal and holds it as for the opening prayer.
- ✘ When he is done, close the book and place it back on the stand near his chair.



## Final Blessing

- ✘ Stand in reverence for the blessing.

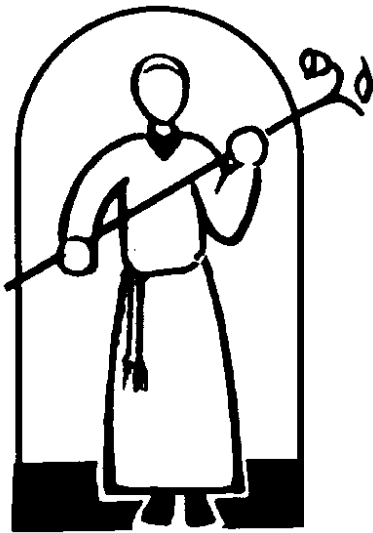
## Dismissal

- ✘ Pick up your candles and the cross. When the priest moves toward the front of the altar, follow him and stand next to him.
- ✘ The rest of the procession will come from the assembly and join you. When the priest bows, so will the rest of you.
- ✘ Walk down the center aisle in this order: servers, Eucharistic Ministers, lectors, priest.

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## AFTER MASS:

- ✘ Wait until the closing song is ended.
- ✘ Extinguish all the candles.
- ✘ Make sure that all vessels from the credence table have been removed and taken to the Sacristy. The Eucharistic Ministers will consume all the remaining Blood of Christ, and will purify the communion vessels.
- ✘ Hang up your alb in the closet in the order of its size. Please fasten the closures at the neck so that it stays on the hanger.
- ✘ Ask if there is anything else that needs to be done before you leave.
- ✘ Say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for all that you were able to do.



## HELPFUL to REMEMBER

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- ✘ Carefully observe the Mass when you are not serving. Notice what the servers and the priest do.
  - ✘ When you are serving, be aware that you are in a leadership role for the Mass. Make your actions worthy of a leader.
  - ✘ Whenever you approach the altar, bow as a sign of reverence, unless you are carrying something.
- 
- ✘ When you are serving, be alert, attentive, and reverent:
    - ✘ Watch the priest and the actions of the Mass to see if you are being called.
    - ✘ Participate in the prayers and hymns.
    - ✘ Pay attention to your own movements to keep yourself in a reverent attitude:
      - ✘ Keep your hands folded in prayer unless you are carrying something or performing a duty.
      - ✘ When you are carrying vessels, treat them gently and reverently.
      - ✘ When you are standing, stand straight up. When you are sitting sit up straight. Keep yourself from fidgeting or slouching.
      - ✘ Do not chew gum during Mass.

## SCHEDULES

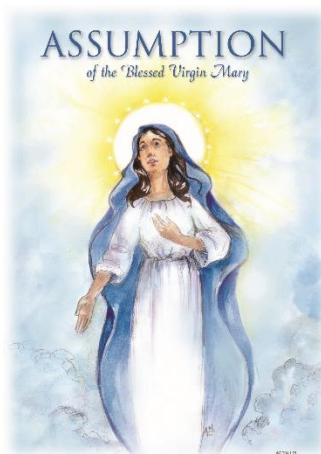
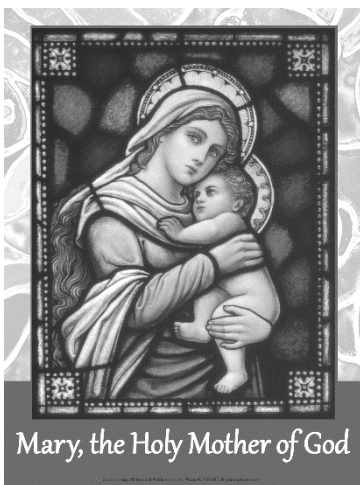
- ✘ Every quarter, schedules are mailed. There is also a copy on the bulletin board in the sacristy. It is your responsibility to make sure you get your schedule.
- ✘ If you know beforehand that you will not be able to serve on a particular day, please let the scheduler know ahead of time so you will not be assigned that day.
- ✘ If you are on the schedule and find out you cannot serve that day, please find a replacement. A phone list is given on the back of the schedules.

In addition to Sunday, the Church sets aside holy days during the year to honor the mysteries of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. On these days, Catholics are bound to participate in Mass, so we have holy day Masses here at IHM on:

January 1	Mary, Mother of God
August 15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
November 1	All Saints
December 8	Immaculate Conception
December 25	Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

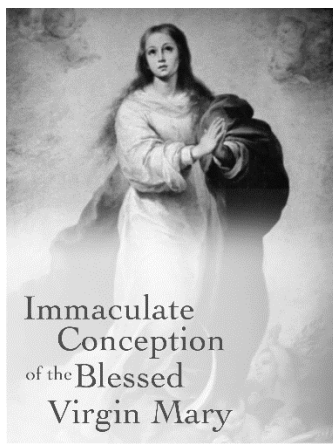
When a holy day falls on a Saturday or Monday, Catholics do not have to participate in Mass, except for Christmas when we are always bound to celebrate Mass.

You will be asked to volunteer to serve at these Masses. There will be sign-up sheets in the weeks before the holy day.



## All Saints

"Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven." - Mt 5:11-12a

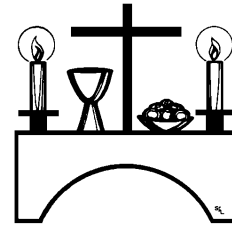


## The Nativity of the Lord

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Lk 2:10-12

**alb:** the white robe, reminding us of our baptism, worn by ministers for liturgy

**altar:** the table in the church on which the bread and wine are placed where through our prayers and the power of the Holy Spirit, they become the Body and Blood of Christ



**ambo:** the raised stand from which a lector (reader) proclaims the word of God during Mass

**assembly:** all the people gathered together to celebrate the liturgy

**boat:** the container that holds the grains of incense for burning

**Book of the Gospels:** the large book containing the gospel readings for Sunday Masses

**carafe:** a container for pouring that holds the wine

**chalice:** the cup used for the consecration of wine at Mass; it becomes the Blood of Christ

**chasuble:** the large colored garment the priest wears over the alb

**ciborium:** a bowl with a lid that holds the consecrated hosts

**cincture:** a rope belt that ties around the waist to hold an alb in place

**corporal:** a white linen cloth placed on the altar under the bread and wine

**credence table:** the table that holds the vessels and linens used at liturgy

**cross bearer:** the server who carries the cross in procession



**deacon:** a man ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders to serve the poor and to serve at liturgy by assisting, reading the gospel, and preaching

**Eucharistic Ministers:** people who help to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ

**font:** a basin of holy water

**genuflect:** going down on one knee as a sign of love and reverence for God and holy places

**lavabo:** the bowl used when the priest washes his hands

**lectionary:** a book that contains the bible stories we read at Mass

**lector:** a reader who proclaims the Word of God during Mass

**liturgy:** a Greek word that means "work of the people;" our celebrations of the Eucharist and other sacraments, and Morning and Evening Prayer

**offertory table:** the table that holds the bread and wine before it is presented at the altar

**pall:** 1. a small cloth-covered square placed over a chalice at Mass. 2. a large cloth draped over the coffin at a funeral Mass

**paten:** a plate that holds the bread that becomes the Body of Christ

**presider:** the person who leads the assembly at liturgy. At Mass, it is a priest. A deacon or lay leader of prayer may lead other liturgies.

**purificator:** a small white cloth used to wipe the cup that holds the Blood of Christ and the paten that holds the Body of Christ

**pyx:** a small box to hold Holy Communion when carried out of church to those who are too sick to attend Mass

**Roman missal:** the book of prayers used at the Mass

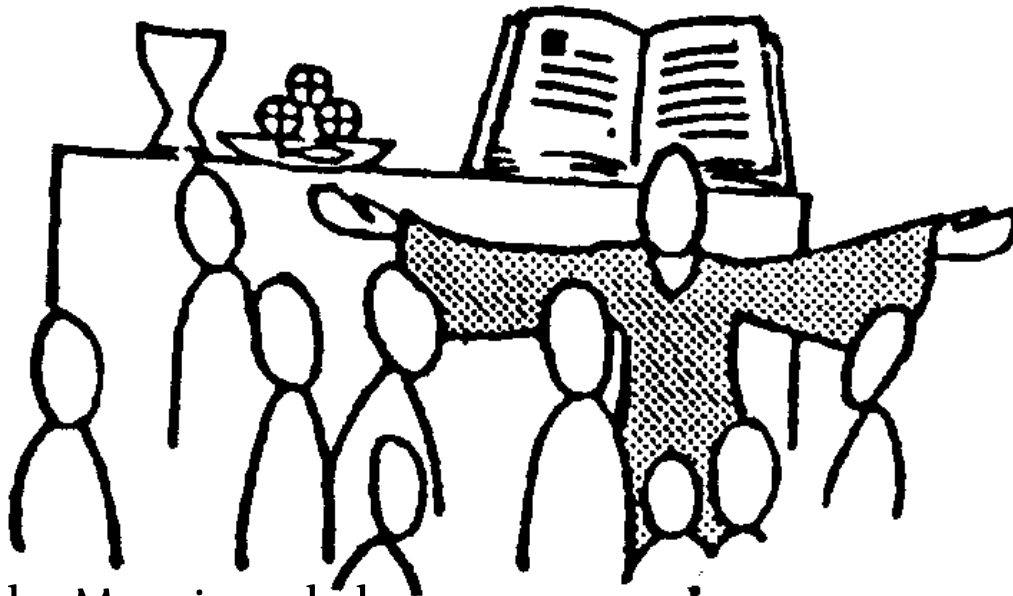
**sacristan:** a person who takes care of all the things in the sacristy, and helps prepare all the things for liturgy

**sacristy:** the room in which all the things used in the liturgy are stored and cared for and prepared, and where the priest and liturgical ministers gather before Mass

**sanctuary:** the space in church around the altar and the ambo

**stole:** the long narrow strip of cloth that symbolizes ordination, worn over both shoulders by a priest or bishop or one shoulder by a deacon

**tabernacle:** the container (at IHM the large copper and brass box to the left of the altar area) in which the Blessed Sacrament (the consecrated bread) is kept so that Holy Communion can be taken to the sick



Go forth, the Mass is ended.

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

**THANKS BE TO GOD.**