



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CHURCH
ALTAR SERVER TRAINING MANUAL
Last Updated November 2019

Thank you for volunteering to serve as an altar server for our parish. It is a very important job and we truly appreciate you sharing your time and talent with us.

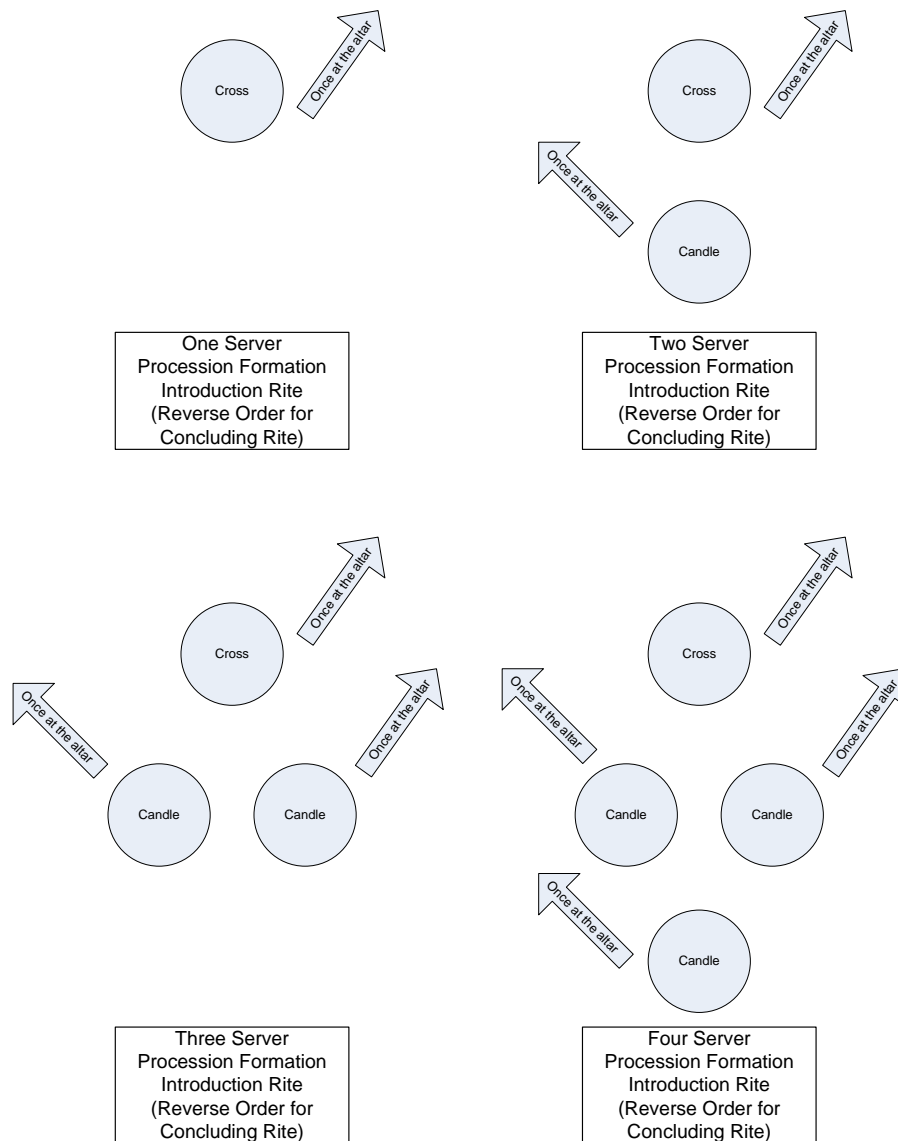
Processing in:

Below is how servers should line up when processing in and out of Church.

The cross bearer will lead when the music begins, followed by the remaining servers.

Once the person(s) in front of you are at the 8th pew, then you can begin to walk keeping the same distance. If you are not holding anything then your hands should be palm to palm, finger tips facing up, and thumbs crossed as if you were making a little cross.

Once at the altar the cross will go right. Left side goes left, right side goes right, and any server in the back row by themselves goes left (see picture below).



Altar Server Procedures

There are the two basic assignments, however if there are more than two servers the roles can be shared among all the servers. It is nice when everyone gets involved to share in the worship of God and serving the community.

- *Chair side (left as you process in)*
- *Cross side (right as you process in)*

CHAIR SIDE SERVER:

Introductory Rite

You will follow the server who is carrying the cross.

Once everyone arrives at the altar, they will go to the left, put down anything they are holding and get the small binder that is behind the presider's chair and hold it up for the priest and deacon. Walk around the microphone when going between the priest and deacon. They will tap or gesture when it is time to move.



Liturgy of the Word

After the prayers have been read, the priest and deacon will sit down. Put the book back and sit down in the pew closest to the deacon and priest's chair .

Readings will begin, gospel will be read, and homily will be given – stay seated. Remember to stand with everyone else when the Gospel is read. The Homily begins when everyone is seated again.

Once the homily is over, there is usually a several second pause, then the priest stands. Please stand and hold the small binder for the priest and deacon. This part will include the Nicene Creed and intercessory prayers.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

When the priest and deacon sit you will prepare the altar and then return to your seat. This includes:

- 1) *Roman Missal (big red book) located behind the priest's chair. Some priest's may already have this on the altar on a stand.*



- 2) *Priest's Chalice/Purificator/Corporal/Paten (usually all together) and glass water pitcher (cruet) from the credence table*



- 3) *Bring up all communion plates to the altar. This is especially important if they have unconsecrated host in them.*
- 4) *Bring up the chalices and purificators if the deacon or Eucharistic Minister hasn't done so. They go on the right side of the altar in a line.*
- 5) *When the priest and deacon go to receive the gifts of bread and wine bring brought up, follow behind them. They will turn to you and give you either the plate of hosts or the pitcher of wine. Bring them to the altar. The plate of hosts goes on the Corporal and the pitcher of wine goes to the side by the chalices.*

After the gifts are brought to the altar, you should wait by the altar and take the water cruet from the altar back to the credence table when the priest or deacon is done with it. The priest or deacon may give you additional items like the pitcher that contained the wine.

GOTO All altar Servers....Page 6

CROSS SIDE SERVER:

Introductory Rite

Lead the procession down the aisle holding the cross.

Place cross in holder and go to your seat.



Cross Holder during Mass.

Liturgy of the Word

Note if you are the only server you will hold the books for the priest and deacon (see above).

Remember to stand during the Gospel

The Liturgy of the Word ends after the Nicene Creed and Intercessory prayers

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Note if you are the only server, you will help with the gifts instead of bringing the cross to the back of the church (see above).

When the priest sits and the collection begins then carry the cross to the back of the church.

After the collection is completed lead the ushers and gift bearers to the front of the church and return cross to holder.

Go to the credence table and prepare for washing of the hands.

Continue to All Servers...Page 5

ALL SERVERS:

Liturgy of the Eucharist (Continued from Above)

Stay at the credence table and assist with the washing of the hands. Pick up either the pitcher and bowl or the towel and wait for the priest to turn to you and then assist in the hand washing. If you are by yourself, put the towel on the forearm of the hand you are holding the bowl with.

The priest will dry his hands. Afterwards the servers and priests bow to each other.

After the washing of the hands the server(s) should get the kneel mat(s) under the credence table and put them on the first step and move the bells to where they can reach them. Servers will kneel after the “great Amen”. One server will ring the bells at three different times:

- ***One ring when the priest puts his hands over the gifts (known as the epiclesis)***
- ***Three rings when the priest says “Do this in memory of Me” and lifts up the Body of Christ.***
- ***Three rings when the priest says “Do this in memory of Me” and lifts up the chalice/Blood of Christ.***

Tip: To keep the bells quiet when not actively ringing them... Place the bells in one hand while holding from the top with the other hand.

Servers should remain kneeling as still as possible until after the Our Father.

At the Our Father all of the servers should return the kneeling mats to the under the credence table then go to the altar and stand in a line, side by side on the top step with arms outstretched and say the Our Father.

Then the priest will ask for the sign of peace and you will shake hands with the other servers and ministers on the altar.

If the Roman Missal (red book) is closed on the altar server can move that to the back of the priests chair and the stand to the credence table.

The Eucharistic ministers, deacon, and priest will prepare the communion plates as needed. The servers will then stand behind the Eucharistic ministers and receive Communion.

When the Eucharistic ministers, deacon, and priest leave the altar, the altar servers should clear the altar of the priest's chalice, paten and purificator and return them to the sacristy. They can then return to their seats in the pew.

After Communion the priest and deacon will return the ciborium to the tabernacle. At that point they may fold and hand you the corporal. If not then one server should go to the altar and fold and return it to the sacristy.

The only thing remaining on the altar should be the metal crucifix, microphone and candles.

Everyone returns to their seats.

CHAIR SIDE SERVER:

Conclusion Rite

This server should get the binder and hold it for the priest. After prayers are completed put the binder back.

{MUSIC WILL START}

This server should stand in front (closer to the altar) of the server with the cross facing the altar.

Go to All Servers Below

CROSS SIDE SERVER:

Conclusion Rite

Stand when the priest/deacons stand and wait until they give the final blessing

{MUSIC WILL START}

This server should get the cross and stand in the middle aisle (about four pews from the first pew and face the altar.

Go to All Servers Below

All Servers:

The priest and deacon will walk to the front of the altar. When they bow, the servers should also bow, and when they turn around, the servers should also turn. All will proceed to the back of the church. The server with the cross will return the cross to its holder and those holding the candles will blow them out.



Mass is over - good job!

Appendix

Credence Table Setup at the start of mass.



At the top right of the table is a glass water pitcher (cruet) and the priest's chalice/purificator/corporal/paten. They are brought up when the altar is prepared.

At the top left of the left table are a metal bowl, metal pitcher and a towel. They are use when the priest washes his hands.

At the center of the table are the communion plates. Those are generally brought up by Eucharistic Ministers when they come up to the altar.

At the bottom of the table are the communion cups and purificators. Usually the deacon or a Eucharistic minister will bring them up as the altar is being prepared.

Sacristy – This is the area where priest, deacons and altar servers get vested. All this is where items for mass are setup and stored away.

This table has spare purificators and towels in the drawers. The drawers are labeled.



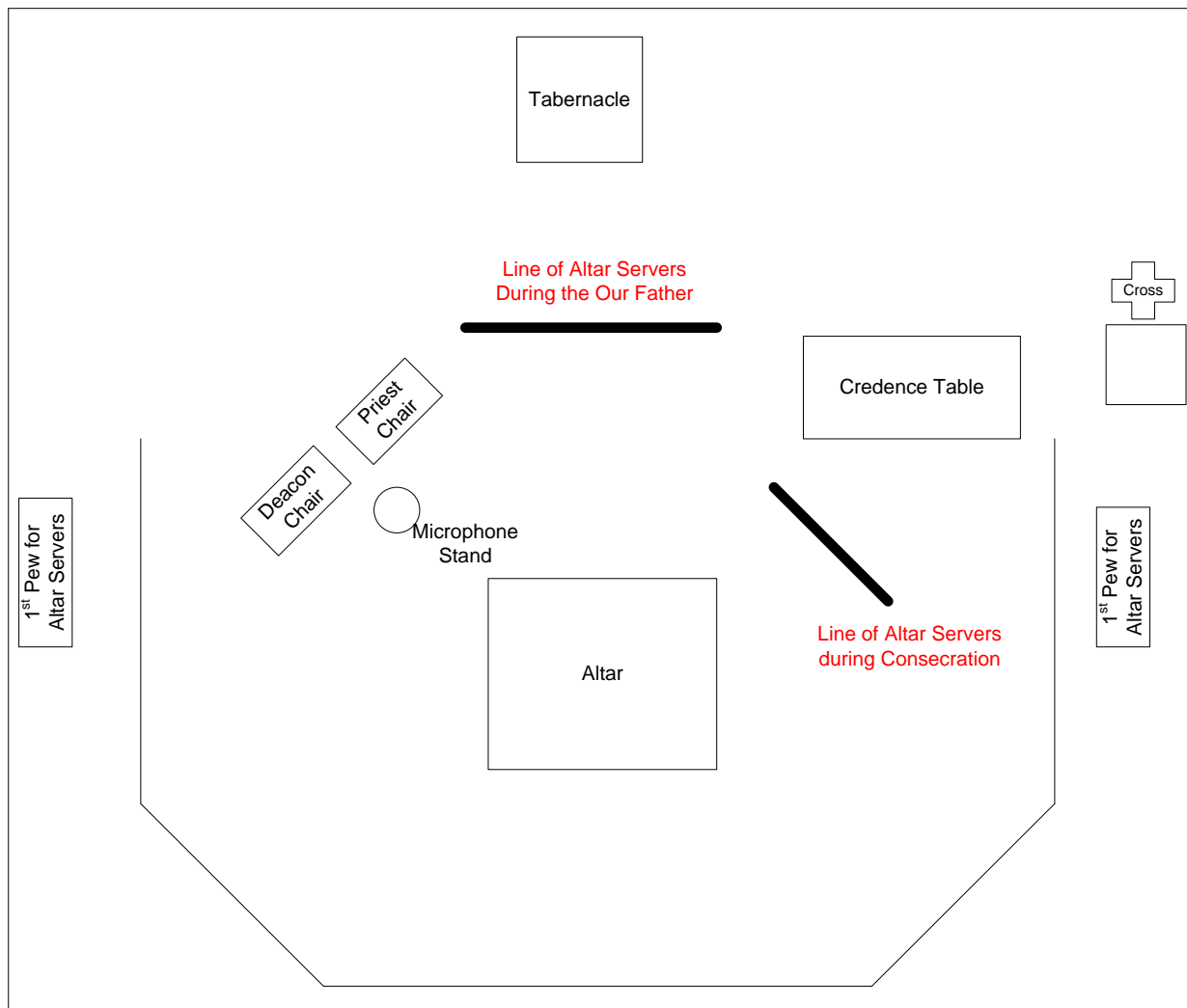
Altar Server Sign-in Book. *The folder with the black binding is for altar servers.*



Altar Server Vestments – Right next to the sign-in book



Bird's eye view of the Altar Area.



Good Practices:

- *Show up 10 minutes prior to the start of mass. Sometimes there are special instructions that the priest may need to give you prior to mass. It also gives you plenty of time to get ready.*
- *Please sign in when serving.*
- *Pick a robe that is the right size for you. Bottom of the robe at the top of your ankle more*
- *Wear dark shoes/sneakers.*
- *During the mass keep an eye on the priest in case he needs something from you.*
- *If you are at mass, but not scheduled, just check in to make sure there are enough servers or if they need a hand. It is always good to have at least two servers. You can also join after mass starts if need be.*