

**Diocese of San Bernardino  
OUR LADY of HOPE PARISH**



**GUIDELINES**  
*for*  
**ALTAR SERVERS**

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## **1. ALTAR SERVER'S PRAYER**

Loving Father, Creator of the universe,  
you call your people to worship,  
to be with you and with each other at Mass.  
Help me, for you have called me also.  
Keep me prayerful and alert.  
Help me to help others in prayer.  
Thank you for the trust you've placed in me.  
Keep me true to that trust.  
I make my prayer in Jesus' name,  
who is with us in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **2. WHAT IS AN ALTAR SERVER?**

Altar Servers are children or teenagers who assist a Priest during Mass.

Altar Servers follow the example of Jesus, who did not hesitate to place himself at the service of others. God the Father was pleased with Jesus because Jesus was humble, simple, prayerful, and responsible to his job.

Altar Servers are an important part of the Mass, because their job is not only as helpers for the Priest but also as the symbol of humble service. When you work near the Altar, everyone in the community will see you and take you as examples.

Being Altar Server also brings you the privilege to be near holy things, touch holy things, and you can see the Church from a different angle. Moreover, this job also helps you being more attentive and responsive to situations in front of a crowd, so that you can be brave as leaders in the future.

### 3. DRESS CODE FOR ALTAR SERVERS

- ▶ **Shoes:** dress shoes (black, brown or white). **Absolutely NO flip-flops.**
- ▶ **Hair:** neat and trimmed appropriately. Long hair should be tied back so that it is not in the face.
- ▶ **Jewelry:** please avoid too much jewelry that makes noise or may interfere with body movements and the service during the Mass.

#### 3.1. Vestments

- ▶ **Cassock:** long black tunic with buttons;
- ▶ **Surplice:** shorter pull-over white outer tunic;
- ▶ **Cross** with string to wear around the neck;

### 4. ALTAR SERVER RULES

- ▶ Serve at every Mass as scheduled, or if you are unable to serve, find someone to cover for you and inform the Liturgy Coordinator;
- ▶ Arrive at least 15 minutes before the Mass to get dressed and help prepare the essentials for the Mass;
- ▶ Be attentive and respond immediately when the Priest asks for help;
- ▶ When you give or receive something from the Priest, bow when you come and before you leave.
- ▶ Perform the duties assigned during the Mass in the prescribed orderly manner;

- ▶ Be quiet and respectful, everyone is looking;
- ▶ Maintain a prayerful posture during all times in the Sacristy; your hands should be folded in your lap;
- ▶ Should not leave the sanctuary after the start of Mass for any reason except bathroom emergencies, illness, or when directed to do so by the Priest;
- ▶ After the Mass, and make sure that your alb and cincture are returned the way you found them.

## 5. ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

### 5.1. Before Mass

- ▶ Arrive and get dressed **15 minutes before the Mass**;
  - Make sure the alb or cassock is the right size, the length covers down to the tops of the shoes and the sleeves should stop at your wrists;
  - Ask the Coordinator or the Priest make sure the cincture is the right color of the day.
- ▶ Check to make sure that everything is set up, on the Altar, for the Mass.
- ▶ Make sure to determine who will be **Crucifix-Bearer** and who will be the **Candle-Bearers**.
  - Candles are only used if there are at least 3 Altar Servers: one for the Cross and two for candles.
- ▶ Gather in the Sacristy with the Priest before Mass → pray and receive blessing from the Priest → take the Cross and candles → **get ready at the door of the Church.**

## 5.2. Entrance Procession

- ▶ At the door of the Church:
  - **Crucifix-Bearer** leads the procession.
    - If there is only one server, the person will carry in the Crucifix.
    - If there is incense, an **Incense-Bearer** is needed to bring the thurible and boat, leading the procession.
  - **Candle-Bearers** are a little behind, on two sides of the Crucifix-Bearer.
    - If there are only two servers, then no candles will be used and the server will line up behind the Crucifix-Bearer.
    - If there are more servers, they walk behind the Candle-Bearers.
- ▶ **Once the choir begins to sing**, the **Servers** will begin to process in.

## 5.3. Arrival at the Sanctuary

- ▶ When the **Servers** arrive in front of the Altar, stop for a second. The **Crucifix-Bearer** stands still, other Servers bow to the Altar.
- ▶ The **Servers** proceed to put the Cross and the candles in their place on the sides of the Altar as when they took them before the Mass.
- ▶ All the **Servers** go to their chair and remain standing while the Priest kiss the Altar.

## 5.4. Greeting

- ▶ The Mass begins with the Sign of the Cross and an introduction from the Priest, followed by the Penitential Rite and the Gloria, if it is outside of Advent and Lent.
- ▶ **After the Gloria, if there is no lectern:** when the Priest says, “Let us pray,” → the **Crucifix-Bearer** brings the Roman Missal over for the Priest to read the Opening Prayer, standing on the Priest left side.

## 5.5. Liturgy of the Word

- ▶ After the First Reading, the Psalm, and the Second Reading, **when the choir begins to sing the Alleluia** → **Candle-Bearers** go and get the candles, and stand on either side of the Altar, **facing each other**.
- ▶ When the Priest comes and takes the Gospel book, he turns to face the people → the **Candle-Bearers** also turn with him to **face the people**.
- ▶ When the Priest turns to walk to the lectern, the **Candle-Bearer on his left hand will move to the right** → two **Candle-Bearers** walk together in front of the Priest, leading him with the Gospel to the ambo.
- ▶ The **Candle-Bearers** will stand on either side of the lectern, **facing the Gospel book**.
- ▶ After the Priest finishes reading the Gospel, as he kisses the Book → the **Candle-Bearers** go back to their seats → the **Crucifix-Bearer** takes the Gospel stand away.
- ▶ Then comes the Homily, the Creed, and the Prayer of the Faithful.

## 5.6. Liturgy of the Eucharist

### 5.6.1. Offertory Collection

- ▶ After the Prayer of the Faithful, the Priest begins walking to the Altar and the Choir begins to sing the Offertory Song → the **Crucifix-Bearer** brings the Roman Missal, the **Candle-Bearers** brings the Chalice, with the Corporal and Purificator to place on the Altar.
- ▶ The **Servers** sit and wait for the Collection to be done, then the **Crucifix-Bearer** goes to the door and leads the offertory procession to the Altar.
- ▶ When the Priest stands and goes down the steps to receive the gifts, the **Candle-Bearers** follow him and stand on either side of the Priest.
- ▶ When the offertory procession arrives in front of the Priest, the **Crucifix-Bearer** bows to greet the Priest, then stands on the side with the **Candle-Bearers**.
- ▶ The Priest will take the gifts and give to the **Servers**. Please be attentive and take what the Priest gives you:
  - The bread, water and wine to be placed on the Altar with the Chalice. Don't forget to remove the lids off the bottles and take them back to the side table.
  - The flowers to be placed on either side of the Altar.
  - The Collection goes to the center of the steps behind the Priest, under the Cross.
- ▶ After placing the gifts in their place, please look out to see if the Priest still needs help. Otherwise, the **Servers** return to their seats and prepare for the next step.

### *5.6.2. Preparation of the Gifts*

- ▶ When the Priest pours water and wine to the Chalice, the **Crucifix-Bearer** stands on his left side → when the Priest finishes with the water, the **Crucifix-Bearer** takes it back to give to the **Candle-Bearers**.
- ▶ One **Candle-Bearer** holds the hand-towel with praying hands, and the other **Candle-Bearer** take the water bottle on one hand and the washing bowl on the other hand.
- ▶ As the Priest bows after the offering of the wine, two **Candle-Bearers** walk to him, standing on his left side.
- ▶ The Priest will put his hands above the washing bowl, and the **Candle-Bearer** with the water bottle pours water on the Priest hands.
- ▶ Then the other **Candle-Bearer** with the hand-towel offers it to the Priest to dry his hands.
- ▶ After the Priest dries his hands, the **Candle-Bearers** bow to the Priest and return to their seats.

### *5.6.3. Eucharistic Prayer*

- ▶ The Mass follows with the Preface and the “**Holy, Holy, Holy,**” sung by the Choir.
- ▶ As the Choir finishes, the **Crucifix-Bearer** takes the bells, gently flips it up-side-down to avoid making noise, and kneels along with the **Candle-Bearers** at their seat.
- ▶ When the Priest puts his hands over the bread and wine on the Altar, the **Crucifix-Bearer** rings the bell by gently twisting his wrist for three seconds.



- ▶ When the Priest holds up the Bread after he reads the words of Jesus, the **Crucifix-Bearer** rings the bell three times, each time for three seconds. When the Priest bows, the Servers also bows. The **Crucifix-Bearer** does the same when the Priest holds up the Chalice.
- ▶ After bowing to the Chalice, all **Servers** may stand up. The **Crucifix-Bearer** gently put the bell back.
- ▶ For the **Sign of Peace**, the **Servers** please approach the Priest to shake his hands, then return to your seats.
- ▶ After the Sign of Peace, when the Choir begins to sing “**Lamb of God**,” the **Crucifix-Bearer** brings the extra patens to the Altar and returns to his seat.

#### **5.6.4. Communion**

- ▶ After the Ministers of the Eucharist line up behind the Priest, the **Servers** also come and stand in one line **facing the Priest**, on the left side of the Altar, to receive Communion. Then they return to their seats and sit.
- ▶ After the Priest returns to the Altar, one of the **Candle-Bearers** brings the water bottle to the Priest, waits for him to take the water and returns it, then the **Candle-Bearer** brings the water bottle back.
- ▶ The other **Candle-Bearer** should be ready, when the Priest finishes cleaning the Patens, come and take them away. The same is done for the Chalice.
- ▶ After the Altar is clean and the Priest returns to his seat, the **Servers** also returns to their seats.

## 5.7. Concluding Rite

- ▶ When the Priest stands and says, “Let us pray,” if there is **no lectern**: → the **Crucifix-Bearer** brings the Roman Missal over for the Priest to read the Opening Prayer, standing on the Priest left side.
- ▶ After the Final Blessing, when the music starts, the **Crucifix-Bearer** takes the crucifix, and the **Candle-Bearers** take the candles, then go down to the central aisle by the first pew, turn to face the Altar, and wait.
- ▶ When the Priest comes down the steps, he faces the Altar for a little time. **As soon as he turns back, the Servers also turn back** and begin to walk slowly to the door.
- ▶ When the Servers arrive at the door, the **Candle-Bearers** blow off the candles, and follow the **Crucifix-Bearer** back to the Sacristy to change.

## 6. WHEN THERE IS INCENSE

- ▶ For the **Entrance Procession**: an **Incense-Bearer** will bring the thurible on the right hand and the incense boat on his left hand, leading the procession.
  - When the **Servers** arrive at the Sanctuary and place the Crucifix and the candles in place, the **Incense-Bearer** stand and wait for the Priest on the left side of the Altar.
  - After kissing the Altar, the Priest will come to get the incense. The **Incense-Bearer** holds the string and lift it higher for the Priest. The Priest will take the incense boat and put incense in the thurible.

- The **Incense-Bearer** stands aside for the Priest to go around the Altar. When he is back to the Altar, the **Incense-Bearer** take the thurible back in.
- ▶ For the **Gospel reading**, while the **Candle-Bearers** take the candles, the **Incense-Bearer** take the thurible and incense boat, come in front of the Priest.
  - The Priest puts incense in the thurible, gives it back to the **Incense-Bearer**. When the Priest goes to get the Book of Gospels, the **Incense-Bearer** takes the thurible to the ambo, standing a little behind to wait.
  - When the Priest arrives at the ambo, he will turn around and take the thurible to incense the Book. Then he returns the thurible to the **Incense-Bearer**.
  - After the Gospel Reading, the **Incense-Bearer** goes with the **Candle-Bearers** to return to their seats.
- ▶ **For the offertory**, when the Priest is pouring water into the Chalice, the **Incense-Bearer** brings the thurible and incense to the Priest. When the Priest incenses the Altar, the **Incense-Bearer** stands aside.
- ▶ As the Priest returns to the Altar after incensing around it, the **Incense-Bearer** takes the thurible from the Priest, then the **Incense-Bearer** incenses the Priest with three lifts of the thurible, each time with two shakes.
- ▶ Then the **Incense-Bearer** goes to the concelebrants and incenses them in similar manner, but each lift of the thurible goes from the center, then to both sides.

- ▶ Finally, the **Incense-Bearer** goes in front of the Altar to incense the people in the same manner with three lifts of the thurible in the center, then in both sides. When this is done, the **Incense-Bearer** returns to his seat.
- ▶ **For the Consecration**, when the Choir starts singing “Holy, Holy, Holy,” the **Incense-Bearer** takes the incense boat, put some incense in the thurible.
- ▶ The **Incense-Bearer** then goes with the other **Servers** down the steps to kneel in front of the Altar. The **Incense-Bearer** with the thurible must be in the middle, directly opposite to the Priest.
- ▶ When the Priest puts his hands over the bread and wine on the Altar, the **Incense-Bearer** lift the thurible up, incense the Body of Christ three times, each time with two shakes of the thurible, matching with the three bell rings of the **Candle-Bearer**. When the Priest bows, all bow with him.
- ▶ When the Priest holds up the Bread after he reads the words of Jesus, the procedure is repeated in the same manner of incensing and bell ringing.
- ▶ After bowing to the Chalice of the Blood of Christ, all **Servers** may stand up and return to their seat to stand. From then on, no more incense is used for the Mass.