

# Altar Server Handbook for the Catholic Parish of St. John the Baptist

## Altar Server Ministry Mission Statement

We assist the parish community in the reverent worship of God, through the example of His Son and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We strive to live out our Baptismal commitment through liturgical service, personal example, and advancement in spiritual life that is centered on the Eucharist. We participate in sacred liturgy with our own work that contributes specifically to the Work of the Faithful and the prayer of the Church and thus our service builds up the Body of Christ.



## Welcome

To all families associated with the altar server ministry!

Any comments, corrections, or questions concerning the material in this handbook, should be forwarded to the Altar Server Team: Zsolt & Eva Nagykaldi or Ann Sorrels. They can be reached via e-mail: [znagykal@gmail.com](mailto:znagykal@gmail.com) or by phone: 405-340-0796 or 405-771-5572.

The purpose of this handbook is to explain how the Altar Server Ministry functions in our parish and how our servers and their parents can most effectively contribute to the success of this Ministry. We hope that the Handbook will answer all your questions about altar serving at St. John's. It is divided into three sections: (1) Serving a Scheduled Mass (2) Other Aspects of Altar Serving, and (3) Description of Server Duties.

**Part 1** outlines the procedures the server should follow to serve a scheduled Mass. The topics are listed in chronological order beginning with knowing what Mass they are scheduled to serve and ending with gathering with all the other ministers just before Mass.

**Part 2** describes the procedures that affect all logistical and administrative areas related to participating in the Altar Server Ministry. The topics are listed alphabetically.

**Part 3** outlines the duties of the servers for regular Mass in our parish.

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# Part 1

## Serving a Scheduled Mass

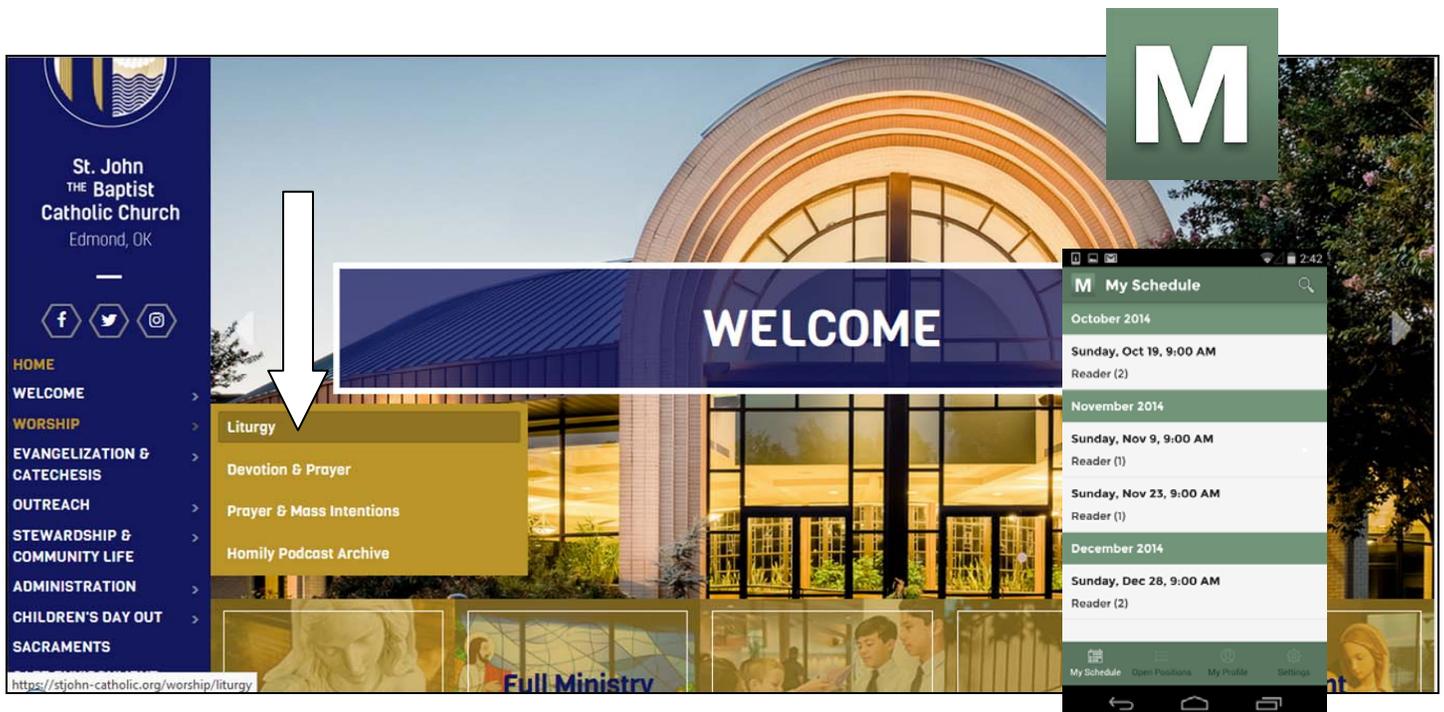
### Ministry Schedule

The first item for any server on the ministry schedule is to know what Masses they are scheduled to serve.

The ministry schedule is published about 2 weeks ahead, each month, and has a listing for all liturgical ministries needed for each Mass. The ministries listed are altar servers, communion ministers, lectors, greeters, ushers, sacristans, and Mass coordinators. The date given for each week of the schedule is always the date of the Saturday Vigil Mass. Masses listed on each month's schedule include all the weekend Masses whose Vigil Mass occurs in that month. For example: the ministries for the Masses on Sunday, November 1, 2009 were on the October schedule because the date of the Vigil Mass for that weekend was October 31<sup>st</sup>.

On the paper copy of the schedule, each of the five Masses for a given weekend is listed in the COLUMN underneath the Mass time. The first four names in that column are the four altar servers for that Mass on that weekend. The Ministry Scheduler Pro mobile app lists all ministers, starting with servers, in a similar fashion.

The ministry schedule for any given month is available on the second vigil Mass from the end of the previous month. The paper schedules are kept in the top three slots of the black plastic bins hanging on the wall in the new gathering area by the BIG glass window located closest to the priest's sacristy. The schedule is also available online at <https://stjohn-catholic.org> (Worship > Liturgy > All Ministry Schedules) and through the Ministry Scheduler Pro mobile app (<https://www.ministryschedulerpro.com>). You can contact the parish office for more information on how to download the app and request access to the online schedule.



### **Mobile App for Ministry Schedule**

Our parish implemented an advanced online scheduling system, called Ministry Scheduler Pro. The system has a web interface and also a corresponding mobile app (iPhone and Android) available from the respective app stores. Participation in this system is initiated by contacting the church office and requesting membership. The office will then send out an email invitation with detailed instructions on how to get started with Ministry Scheduler Pro.

Through the web account or the app, users can access their personal schedules, request and accept subs, and update their profile. The web account is accessible via [www.rotundasoftware.com/ministry/StJohn\\_Edmond](http://www.rotundasoftware.com/ministry/StJohn_Edmond) after entering the user name and password received from the church office. Once you are logged in, you can click on the "Help" tab at the top of the screen to see a short video and printable guide that will explain step by step how to update your information and interact with the scheduler.

If you have an iOS or Android device, you can download a free app that will make it easier to view your scheduled dates, request and accept subs, and update your profile from your mobile device! Follow these steps to get started:

1. Go to the App Store or Play Store on your device and download the "Ministry Scheduler Pro" app.
2. Open the app and enter the following under Organization ID: StJohn\_Edmond
3. Enter your Web Terminal Username and Password to log in.

Then, open the MSP app to see your scheduled dates, request and accept subs, and update your profile!

### **Dress Code**

One of the most important roles for altar servers is to maintain an attitude of reverence. One way this attitude is projected is the way the server dresses for Mass. In this regard, the same principles should be applied that pertain to modesty and appropriateness for participating in Mass, in general.

However, servers are assisting the clergy at the Altar and therefore there are a few other considerations. All scheduled servers or servers who are substituting for another server should wear dress shoes to Mass. Tennis shoes do not look good with the vestments the servers wear. Dark colored shoes are preferred. Bright and neon colors are strongly discouraged as they can result in distractions. Boys should wear full length socks with their dress shoes as well as some type of slacks. Jeans should not be worn, but khaki (parish school uniform) slacks are OK. The slacks should not be so long that they hang down over the shoes. During the summer, shorts may be worn provided that bare legs are not visible for the boys (so once again the full socks are necessary).

Please dress modestly. If shorts are worn by girls, please be sure they are not too short. Spaghetti straps and tank top-like shirts are prohibited. Flip-flops and sandals not secured to the back of the feet are also prohibited. In general, shoes must be modest, secure to walk/climb stairs with and dark toned to match the cassocks.

The dress code does not apply strictly to servers who are being asked on the spot by the Mass coordinator or any of the altar server coordinators to substitute, because a scheduled server did not show up, since they had no way of knowing when they came to church that they would be asked to serve. However, it is advisable to ANTICIPATE that one can be called upon to help at any Mass and therefore wearing acceptable dress for all Masses is a good practice. This is also in line with the role of the server to show a good example in church.

### **Check-In Procedure for Masses**

Having the proper number of altar servers present and checked in is the goal for altar server coordinators and the Mass coordinator. The following procedure was developed to have all the necessary servers ready for Mass in sufficient time so that Mass may begin in a prompt and orderly fashion.

The check-in procedure is:

- (1) Get to church on time - this means 20 minutes(!) before Mass;
- (2) Check in with the Mass coordinator;
- (3) Write your name in the server's book that is in the server's sacristy; and
- (4) Go to the restroom and WASH YOUR HANDS (use the bathroom).

### **Getting To the Church on Time**

It is very important that servers arrive to church on time and that they check in with the Mass coordinator. The server should arrive at church at least 20 minutes before Mass. **Parents, this is your main responsibility**, since most of the altar servers are not old enough to drive themselves to Mass. If a family is notoriously late arriving to church on time, the ministry leadership will discuss corrective actions with the parents. If these actions prove to be ineffective, the server may be removed from the general schedule until further intervention.

Check in with the Mass coordinator **FIRST**. Servers have been replaced even though they arrived at Mass in plenty of time, simply because they forgot to check in with the Mass coordinator. The Mass coordinator didn't have any idea that the server was already upstairs in the server's sacristy. Once a server has been replaced this way, the replacement server (if chooses so) has the right to serve the Mass over the scheduled server.

At ~10-15 minutes before Mass, the Mass coordinator may replace an absent server (a server who has not arrived and/or checked in) with an available server. For example, at a Sunday Mass, a scheduled server arrived a few minutes before Mass and had already been replaced by the Mass coordinator. The server was not allowed to serve. This may seem harsh for the server and the family, but the reality is that there has to be some point in time when all the servers have to be all accounted for in order for the Mass to begin in an orderly fashion. That's why all servers should arrive 20 minutes before Mass and check in immediately with the coordinator.

Altar servers are unique compared to other ministries, because they are not able to manage their personal time and commute to the church without the help of parents. The Mass coordinators have to account for all ministers. They do not have the time to run around to see who has or hasn't shown up.

### **Checking In with the Mass Coordinator**

When you arrive at church to serve Mass, go to the area by the priest's sacristy and check in with the Mass coordinator. We encourage all servers (and their parents) to get to know their Mass coordinator as soon as possible. It is a good idea that for your first Mass you find out who your Mass coordinator is (you can ask an altar server coordinator) and then you introduce yourself.

If you arrive before the Mass coordinator is present, you can check yourself in. Open the check-in folder to the page with the correct date and Mass time and place a checkmark in the box after your name.

If you are substituting for another server, place a checkmark in the box after the name of the server that you are substituting for and print your name in the box to the right that has the heading of "Substitute."

If you arrive before the Mass coordinator is present and you are not sure how to check in, just come back 5 or 10 minutes later to check in with the Mass coordinator.

### **Writing Your Name in the Server's Check-in Book**

Go to the server's sacristy and write your name in the server's check-in book which should be on the counter by the candles. You also need to select which serving position you are going to serve. In addition, please check the "Substitute" box, if you are substituting for someone. This will allow altar server coordinators to account for servers in all situations.

The rule is that the first person who checks in gets the first choice on what position they want to serve. So, write your name in the book as soon as you get into the servers' sacristy. **Senior or more experienced servers are asked to let the newer servers select their position of first.** The second person to sign in gets second choice and so on. If you do not have a preference for your position you do not have to check a position when you write your name in the book. You may let everyone else choose what they want and then you can make a choice.

It is never permissible for a server to come to the server's sacristy way earlier (e.g., the day before) to sign in for that weekend's Mass so they can have first choice of position.

There will be times when one of the altar server coordinators will assign positions for one or more servers. This is generally true only when a server is serving their first Mass or when it is a special Mass (i.e. Holy Thursday). It can also happen, if a server, who has special needs, is only trained to serve in specific positions. In that case, the server coordinators will sign the person's name in the book and check the position they are to serve whenever that person is scheduled to serve Mass.

Severs are asked to vary their serving positions among the four main roles and also to serve periodically as a thurifer, if they were trained. All servers should be comfortable with all positions based on their training. No position is reserved for boys or based on other server characteristics. Any server should be comfortable with serving in any role that they were trained for.

### **Getting Vested for Mass**

After servers washed their hands, they may get vested (dressed) for Mass. The two vestments that the servers wear are the cassock (the full length black garment) and the surplice (the white top).

When getting vested, servers should NOT take the vestments off the hanger and lay them on the counter top or other surfaces before they put them on. These surfaces are not always clean and could soil the vestments (particularly the surplice). Instead, they can take the vestments off the hangers and hang them on the hooks that are on the closet door (there are additional hooks behind the door to the sacristy). Ideally, the server should take the cassock off the hanger and put it on **before** getting the surplice off of the hanger.

The cassocks range in size from 9 to 19. The basic rule is that each larger size is two inches longer than the size before it. Servers should wear the largest safe-length size cassock possible. A cassock is too long if the hem at the bottom rests the top of the server's shoes. Servers in growth should continue checking the length of the cassock using the large mirror in the server sacristy. If the cassock appears too short, try on the next size.

The surplices only come in sizes 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, & 20. The size of the surplice depends on the size of the cassock that the server wears. If a server wears an even size cassock, they should wear the same size for their surplice. If the server wears an odd size cassock, they should wear a surplice that is one size larger than their cassock.

The vestments are organized in the closet. All cassocks and surplices are on size-appropriate hangers. There are labels in the closet that specify where a vestment is hung. Mass does not end when servers process out from the church! It ends when servers **CAREFULLY HUNG UP THEIR VESTMENTS** and put them back in the proper place. Hastily hung vestments often end up on the floor causing damage and extra work! Cassocks should be hung up with the top snap fastened, the sleeves of the cassock hanging on both ends of the hanger, and the collar turned up. The cassock should be placed by size in the correct spot in the closet (use the labels in the closet as guides). Surplices should be hung neatly, with the sleeves of the surplice hanging on both ends of the hanger and placed in the correct spot. Surplices sized 16 and up should be hung on the wide hangers to prevent them from slipping off.

### **Reporting to the Check-in Area Just Before Mass**

All Mass ministers gather just before Mass begins in the check-in area by the priest sacristy for a group prayer.

All servers need to leave the server sacristy approximately 8 minutes before Mass begins (use the time on you Smartphone or displayed on the telephone on the counter) with the cross and the candles and report to the check-in area. All the Mass ministers will gather in a circle and be led in prayer by the priest. The servers who are carrying the cross or the candles are not expected to hold hands with anyone else. If they are standing by an adult minister, that minister will sometimes place their hand on the shoulder of the server holding a cross or a candle. After the prayer is over, the servers will move to the glass doors just outside the back of the church to get ready for the procession.

## Part 2

# Other Aspects of Altar Serving

### Adult Altar Servers

The parish occasionally offers altar server training to adults. The role of the adult altar server is to serve at Masses where student servers are not available or for some other reason adults are preferred.

Adult servers are not put on the ministry schedule unless there is a serious shortage of student altar servers for a particular Mass. They will be used for special occasions, funeral Masses, or for sign-up Masses that still have vacancies two days before a Holy Day. Adult altar servers may also be called as substitutes for a scheduled server.

### Altar Serving Notes

An email is sent to the families of all scheduled altar servers on a monthly basis. It contains information or news that pertains to altar serving. It is the primary way that information is communicated from the parish to the altar server. The email can be sent to multiple addresses for one altar server if that is convenient for the family. The memo also allows you to respond to altar server coordinators if you have any questions, feedback, or concerns involving the altar serving ministry.

### Arranging for a Substitute

When a server is scheduled to serve a Mass and the server will not be available to serve, it is the responsibility of the server to find a substitute. Although it is not required, it is strongly recommended that when an arrangement for a substitute server has been made, one of the altar server coordinators is notified (preferably by email). **The earlier a server tries to find a substitute, the more likely they will find a sub.** Do not wait until a day or two before you are scheduled to serve to find a substitute!

Most experienced servers have formed contacts with other servers and have an understanding that they would be willing to substitute for each other should they need help and they happened to be available. New servers are encouraged to get to know the other servers in their Mass group to form these types of collaborations.

Another popular means of obtaining a substitute is for a server with conflict to determine what other Masses that month (or the next month) they are available to serve, then contact one of the servers who is scheduled for that date and arrange to “trade” serving times.

Another possibility is to call everyone on the phone list for your Mass or any other servers you know from other Masses to see if they would substitute for you.

As a last resort, one of the altar server coordinators can be notified to try to find a substitute, but only if notification is sent by the Wednesday before the server is scheduled to serve. This will work for rare instances. If a server is repeatedly trying to use altar server coordinators to find a substitute, they probably do not have enough time to devote to the altar serving ministry and they may be asked to suspend their participation in the ministry until a more suitable time.

### **Changing Your Scheduled Mass to a Different Mass**

If a server wants to be scheduled for a different Mass than the one they are serving, they need to notify one of the altar server coordinators. If there is a serving spot available at the Mass you want to change to, we will make the change right away. If a spot is not available, we will place your name on a waiting list for that Mass. As serving spots become available, they will be filled with the names from the top of the waiting list.

### **Family Emergencies**

Should a family emergency arise that results in the server not serving a scheduled Mass, they should try to get a substitute to serve for them as soon as possible. If they are not able to arrange for a substitute due to the emergency, they should notify one of the altar server coordinators as soon as possible and let them know why they can't serve. Servers who are not able to find a substitute due to a substantial emergency occurring close to their serving time (e.g., sudden illness on Sunday morning), are excused from serving and will NOT be charged with a missed Mass. Most substantial emergencies are related to sudden illness or the death of a family member. However, even in these cases, we ask the parents to notify the altar server coordinators as soon as they can, since there may be additional arrangements related to the server's continued participation.

### **Filling in as a Substitute**

If a server agrees to substitute for another server, they have assumed the responsibility for serving that Mass, just as if they were on the original schedule. If the substitute finds out later that he or she cannot serve that Mass, they need to notify the originally scheduled server **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** or they need to find another server to serve for the originally scheduled server. In either case, one of the altar server coordinators should also be notified. If nobody shows up to serve the Mass, the substitute server may be held responsible for the absence.

When checking in with the Mass coordinator, tell the Mass coordinator your name and the name of the person that you are substituting for. In addition, check the "Substitute" box on the altar server sign-in sheet in the vesting sacristy as well.

### **Funeral Masses**

Servers interested in serving funeral Masses should first receive specific training to serve at these Masses. Funeral training is offered periodically throughout the year, upon need. They can then call the church office at 340-0691 during business hours (M-F 8:00-12:00 am & 1:00-4:30 pm) and ask to be added to the funeral server list. Funerals generally last about an hour, but occasionally they may go longer. If the Mass is said with a casket, one of the servers must be trained in using incense. For most funerals, there is a monetary offering given to each server. Service points are given to servers who serve funerals (see Service Hours).

During the school year, funeral servers are taken from the students in middle school at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School. SEAS students who serve funerals during the school day do not receive service hours.

### **Getting Off the Ministry Schedule**

There may be a time for all servers when they can no longer serve on the regular schedule, whether the removal is temporary or permanent.

When a server requests to be removed from the schedule, they should notify one of the altar server coordinators right away. If notified at least one week before a new ministry schedule comes out, they can be taken off the serving schedule for the following month. If notified after that time and if their name is on the next month's ministry schedule, they can (1) serve the following month as their last scheduled Mass(es), (2) get a substitute for the following month.

If the removal is only temporary, they should talk with one of the altar server coordinators to determine whether their spot on the roster for the Mass will be held open for them. As soon as the server is ready to resume being a scheduled server, they can notify one of the altar server coordinators.

**Not being on the regular ministry schedule does NOT mean that the server can no longer serve.** It only means that their name will not appear on the ministry schedule. They may still serve at any Mass that needs a server (including funerals and weddings and special occasions), they may substitute for any other scheduled server, and they may still sign up to serve on Feast Days and Holy Days.

### **Holy Week Liturgies**

Holy Week is one of the most important and most "demanding" times on the liturgical calendar. During Holy Week, there are four special liturgies: (1) Palm Sunday Mass, (2) Holy Thursday Mass, (3) Good Friday Liturgy, and (4) Easter Vigil Mass (on Saturday night).

All Holy Week Masses have special liturgical elements that require extra server training. For these special liturgies, servers receive additional training, usually on Wednesday. Servers do not sign up for these liturgies; they are selected from the pool of more experienced servers. Traditionally, the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday liturgies are offered to high school age servers first. Some of the high school servers are past servers who are no longer on the schedule, but still want to be part of the ministry. Any server can elect to serve at the Palm Sunday Masses, but they also need to receive brief additional training, usually offered 30 minutes before the Mass.

Servers who know they would like to be part of these special liturgies can notify one of the altar server coordinators at any time after Christmas. The ministry may also ask for servers via e-mail (Altar Server Notes) that comes out before or during Lent.

### **Illness**

If a server is truly ill when they are scheduled to serve Mass, they should NOT serve the Mass. They should try to get a substitute, if time permits. But if they are not able to get a substitute, they should notify one of the altar server coordinators, as soon as possible. Servers who don't show up for Mass and are not able to find a substitute because of sudden illness, but notified the coordinators, will NOT be charged with a missed Mass.

### **Limiting Server Schedule Spots**

Currently each regular Mass is limited to about 22 scheduled serving spots. The reason for limiting servers for any particular Mass is to allow them to serve about once every four to six weeks. In some past situations, so many servers were scheduled for a particular Mass, that they served only once every two months, which is not enough for them to maintain (let alone improve) their skills. In other cases, however, there may be a great need for more servers at specific Masses (e.g., 7:30 am on Sunday), so servers may be asked to switch, if possible.

### **Minimum Number of Masses Served**

Servers on the ministry schedule have made a commitment to serve the parish in the altar serving ministry. Therefore, there is an expectation that the server will serve their scheduled Masses. Servers, who are constantly getting substitutes, may not have the sufficient time to devote to this ministry. Therefore, servers who serve less than five Masses per year may be removed from the schedule, if there are servers on the waiting list to serve at that Mass time. If a server has served less than five Masses in a year and has received a notice that they are being removed from the serving schedule, but believes they have a valid reason to remain on the schedule, should contact one of the altar server coordinators after receiving their removal notice.

### **Missed Masses**

When a scheduled server does not show up for Mass and does not arrange for a substitute, they are charged with a missed Mass. Missing more than three Masses in a year could result in the server being removed from the schedule. For the purposes of missed Masses, the “year” begins in September and ends in August of the following year.

For the first and second missed Mass in a year, the server receives an email notice. The purpose of the notice is two-fold. It makes the server (or the family) aware that a Mass was missed and it provides an opportunity to offer an explanation and find a remedy.

Three missed Masses in a year usually result in the server being suspended from the serving schedule for at least a two- month period (see Suspended Server for details on suspension).

Four or more missed Masses in a year will result in the server being suspended indefinitely from the serving schedule. If the server wishes to go back on the schedule, a conference will be held to determine what is causing the missed Masses and working out a solution to the problem. If the server is allowed to go back on the schedule, the first time the server has a missed Mass in the following year, he/she can be suspended permanently from the schedule at the discretion of the altar server coordinators.

When a server **agrees to be a substitute for another server, they are assuming the responsibility of the scheduled server**. If the substitute misses the Mass, the substitute is charged with the missed Mass, not the scheduled server. That is why it is recommended that whenever a scheduled server trades serving times or gets a substitute, that server should notify one of the altar server coordinators of the change.

### **Requesting to Serve at Specific Masses**

Occasionally, servers will request to serve at a specific weekend Mass. The most popular request is for a server to serve at the Mass where a younger sibling is making their First Communion. At this time, this is not an option that is made available to servers. The only suggestion is to wait until the ministry schedule comes out. Then the server (or parent) can contact one of the scheduled servers for that specific weekend Mass, to see if that scheduled server is willing to let the requesting person serve the Mass. One possible method is to offer to trade your scheduled serving time with the scheduled server.

### **Continuing Training and Development for Servers**

Any time a server feels the need for additional server training for whatever reason, the server should notify one of the altar server coordinators. We will try to schedule a time in the next training group where the server can go through the Mass again in a practice session. Periodically throughout the year, the ministry offers various refreshers for “basic training” and ongoing server development opportunities for those who are more experienced, including training for incense, funerals, weddings, and serving for a bishop.

### **Scheduling Around Vacations/Conflicting Activities**

If a family knows well in advance that a server will not be able to serve on a specific weekend, it can be arranged for the server not to be scheduled for specific dates. For example, if a server is going to be out of town for a Thanksgiving vacation, one of the altar server coordinators should be notified at least 4 weeks before. They will then arrange that the server will not be scheduled for the specific dates. The deadline date for notification is usually given in the Altar Serving Notes. The deadline date is determined based on the availability date for the ministry schedule, but it is usually the Friday before the **third** Saturday from the **end** of the previous month. When in doubt about the date, just email the altar server coordinators. Using this approach has greatly contributed to reducing the number of altar servers who don't show up or get a sub when they are scheduled to serve.

### **Service Hours**

For those servers who need service hours for school or another organization (such as National Junior Honor Society), each weekend Mass served at St. John's can be turned into 1.5 hours of service credit.

Servers who know that they are going to need service hours (or even think they may need them), should let the altar server coordinators know, so that they can keep track of these Masses. To get service hours, a server must have actually served the Mass, not just had their name on the ministry schedule. It is therefore very important that each time one serves Mass, the person checks in on the schedule sheet in the server sacristy.

Servers, who serve funerals for our parish, may also receive service hours provided they did not serve the funeral on school time (SEAS middle school students). The server will need to notify one of the altar server coordinators when serving a funeral, since there is no comprehensive list of all funeral servers.

If a server has questions about any other server activities that would qualify for service points, they should contact one of the altar server coordinators.

### **Sign Up Masses**

For Holy Day Masses and a few other special Masses, sign up sheets are posted in the new gathering area for all Mass ministers to sign up.

There is usually a vigil Mass the evening before, a 7:30 am Mass on the Holy Day, and another evening Mass on the Holy Day. There are four lines underneath the heading "Servers" for each Mass that is scheduled for that Holy Day. Servers interested in serving should choose which Mass to serve and then sign their name on one of the four lines for "Servers" for that Mass. Make sure you are available to serve the Mass you select. Once you sign up, you must either serve the Mass or find someone to take your place. **You may not cross your name off the sign up sheet and expect someone else to sign up on that line.** If that happens and the Mass coordinator has to find a server to fill in for you or the Mass does not have a full team of four servers, you may be charged with a missed Mass or you may lose your privilege to sign up for special Masses in the future.

### **Substituting at a Mass Time Other than the Scheduled Mass**

Any server is free to substitute at any Mass at any time.

Any server who is willing to be on the substitute list for Masses other than the Mass they are regularly scheduled to serve, should refer to the section Telephone Lists of Altar Servers.

### **Suspended Server**

When a server is suspended, the server's name will not appear on the ministry schedule. The server is still a server and can serve at any Mass where a server is needed. They may substitute for another server; they may still sign up to serve special Masses such as Holy Day Masses, funerals, weddings, holiday Masses, etc. A suspended server may continue to serve Mass as long as they know the current serving duties. However, the same level of responsibility and care is expected from the server when he or she signs up for these Masses. Those servers, who were permanently suspended from the schedule due to a high degree of unreliability, will not be allowed to substitute or sign up for special occasions, except under a special arrangement with the altar server coordinators.

### **Telephone Lists of Altar Servers**

Telephone numbers for altar servers are periodically sent out to the servers via email. The list of names and phone numbers that is sent is the list of only those servers who are scheduled for the same Mass or who have volunteered to be a substitute for that Mass. Adult servers on the substitute list will be designated as an adult. If a list of the names and phone numbers of other servers is needed, they can be obtained by e-mailing one of the altar server coordinators with the request. These names and phone numbers should only be used for the altar serving ministry of our parish. Under no circumstances will server contacts be made available to third parties, other distribution lists, or commercial use!

Should a scheduled server wish to have their name on the substitute list for other Masses than the one they are regularly scheduled to serve, they should notify one of the altar server coordinators. The server should indicate which other Mass(es) they would like to serve as a substitute.

When a server wishes to remove their name from one or more substitute Masses, they should also notify an altar server coordinator and indicate which substitute list(s) they would like to be removed from.

### **Wedding Masses**

Servers interested in serving wedding Masses, should call the church office at 340-0691 during business hours (M-F 8:00-12:00 am & 1:00-4:30 pm) and speak to Anne Keef. Ask Anne to add your name to the wedding server list. Wedding Masses generally last about an hour.

# Part 3

## Server Duties

(Last reviewed in January, 2019)

Available online at <http://www.stjohn-catholic.org>

**Bolded, red items refer to objects or sacred vessels the servers need to attend to during Mass.**

### **Before Mass Begins**

Servers should arrive at church at least **20 MINUTES before Mass** to check in with the Mass Coordinator. Go to the server sacristy and write your name in the sign-in book. **WASH YOUR HANDS!** At 8 minutes before Mass, vested servers should take the cross and the candles down to the new gathering area outside the priest vesting sacristy to prepare for Mass.

### **Cross Bearer (4-Server Mass)**

**Procession** – Begin processing in when the congregation starts singing. Process in slowly. When you reach the front pew you may walk at normal speed to **put the cross** in the cross stand and move to Gospel position. Watch the priest. Bow to the altar and genuflect to the tabernacle with the priest. Move to your chair.

**Let Us Pray** – Watch the priest to see when to take the **book of prayers** for the Collect. After the prayer is over, put the book of prayers on the small table next to your chair.

**Gospel Reading** – When the music plays after the second reading, stand and IMMEDIATELY move to Gospel position. At the end of the gospel, the 4<sup>th</sup> server will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) Take **2 chalices** to the altar and bow to the altar, take the *low-gluten ciborium* also, if it is on the credence table, (2) take the **cross to the back** of the church. Start processing forward when the priest comes around the side of the altar.

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) **Take the cross** to the cross stand, (2) move to a position by the ambo, (3) take the **empty wine pitcher** to the credence table, then be seated.

**Ring the Bells** – (1) When the priest turns his PALMS DOWN over the altar, **ring the bells** with a SHORT ring. (2) When the priest elevates the Body of Christ after saying "...which will be given up for you" ring the bells with a 3-PART ring and bow your head. (3) When the priest elevates the Blood of Christ after saying "Do this in memory of me" ring the bells with a 3-PART ring and bow your head.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and lead the servers up the steps of the altar to communion position. Do not hold hands or elevate your hands during the "Our Father."

**After Receiving Communion** – 4<sup>th</sup> server leads the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers are to move to the altar to remove all vessels. Cross bearer will take **one item off of the altar** to the credence table, then sits at the ready to hold a **folder or a book**.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Let Us Pray** – Take the **book of prayers** to the priest. Do not close the book and leave until the priest says "And may Almighty God Bless You ..." Place the book of prayers on the small table by your chair.

**Processing Out** – When the music starts for the recessional, **take the cross** from the cross stand and move to the back edge of the rug behind the right side of the altar and wait for the other servers to line up. When the other servers are still, lead them in a head bow to the altar, then process off the altar to the right. Wait for the others and process to the middle of the center aisle. Turn and face the altar. After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

### Cross Bearer (3-Server Mass)

**Procession** – Begin processing in when the congregation starts singing. Process in slowly. When you reach the front pew you may walk at normal speed to **put the cross** in the cross stand and move to Gospel position. Watch the priest. Bow to the altar and genuflect to the tabernacle with the priest. Move to your chair.

**Let Us Pray** – Watch the priest to see when to take the **book of prayers**. After the prayer, put the book of prayers on the small table next to your chair.

**Gospel Reading** – When the music plays after the second reading, stand and IMMEDIATELY move to Gospel position. At the end of the gospel candle left will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) Take **2 chalices** to the altar, take the *low-gluten ciborium* also, if it is on the credence table, (2) take the **water cruet** to the altar and place it on the right side of the altar, bow to the altar, (3) take the **cross to the back** of the church. Start processing forward when the priest comes around the side of the altar.

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) **Take the cross** to the cross stand, (2) move to your position by the ambo, (3) take the **empty wine pitcher** to the credence table, then be seated.

**Ring the Bells** – (1) When the priest turns his PALMS DOWN over the altar, **ring the bells** with a SHORT ring. (2) When the priest elevates the Body of Christ after saying "...which will be given up for you" ring the bells with a 3-PART ring and bow your head. (3) When the priest elevates the Blood of Christ after saying "Do this in memory of me" ring the bells with a 3-PART ring and bow your head.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and lead the servers up the steps of the altar to communion position. Do not hold hands or elevate your hands during the "Our Father."

**After Receiving Communion** – Candle left leads the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers are to move to the altar to remove all vessels. Cross bearer will take **one item off of the altar**, then sits at the ready to hold a **folder or a book**.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Let Us Pray** – Take the **book of prayers** to the priest. Do not close the book and leave until the priest says "And may Almighty God Bless You ...". Place the book of prayers on the small table by your chair.

**Processing Out** – When the music starts for the recessional, **take the cross** from the cross stand and move to the back edge of the rug behind the right side of the altar and wait for the other servers to line up. When the other servers are still, lead them in a head bow to the altar, then process off the altar to the right. Wait for the others and process to the middle of the center aisle. Turn and face the altar. After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

### Candle Left (4-Server Mass)

**Procession** – Process in about one full step behind the cross bearer. When you reach the front pew you may walk at normal speed. Stay to the left and even with candle right. Do not turn to go up the steps until candle right turns. **Place the candle** in the candle stand and move to Gospel position. Watch the priest. Bow to the altar and genuflect to the tabernacle with the priest. Move to your chair.

**Gospel Reading** – When the music plays after the second reading, stand and IMMEDIATELY move to Gospel position. At the end of the gospel the 4<sup>th</sup> server will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) Take **2 chalices** to the altar, (2) take the **candle taper** to the center of the altar, bow to the altar, get fire from the ambo candles, light the candles by the altar, pull in the wick and then and push it out of the taper, take the candle taper to the credence table, then move to Gospel position and WAIT.

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) **Take a gift** to the altar, (2) STAY AT THE ALTAR AND IMMEDIATELY get the **water cruet off the altar** and stand by the altar, (3) give the water cruet to the priest or deacon and wait for the priest or deacon to hand it back to you, (4) take the water cruet to the credence table, then be seated.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and move to communion position.

**After Receiving Communion** – The 4<sup>th</sup> server will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After All Priests, Deacons, and Communion Ministers Have Left the Altar to Give Communion to the Congregation** – (1) Take the **ablution dish** to the lower right corner of the altar and take the lid off, (2) if necessary, reassemble the priest's chalice, (3) bow to the altar, and (4) take the **priest's chalice** to the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers are to move to the altar to remove all vessels. If necessary, a server should make a second trip to the altar to remove any remaining items.

**Processing Out** – Follow candle right up the steps. Move to the left side of candle right and stand even with him/her. Bow to the altar when the cross bearer bows. Move to the near candle stand, **remove the candle**, and follow the cross bearer. Stay even with candle right. When the cross bearer stops in the center aisle, stop, then turn and face the altar After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

### Candle Left (3-Server Mass)

**Procession** – Process in about one full step behind the cross bearer. When you reach the front pew you may walk at normal speed. Stay to the left and even with candle right. Do not turn to go up the steps until candle right turns. **Place the candle** in the candle stand and move to Gospel position. Watch the priest and bow and genuflect with the priest. Move to your chair.

**Gospel Reading** – When the music plays after the second reading, stand and IMMEDIATELY move to Gospel position. At the end of the gospel candle left will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) Take **2 chalices** to the altar, (2) take the **last 2 chalices** to the altar and line up all the chalices, (3) take the **candle taper** to the center, bow to the altar, get fire from the ambo candles, light the candles by the altar, pull in the wick and then and push it out of the taper, take the candle taper to the credence table, then move to Gospel position and WAIT.

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) **Take a gift** to the altar, (2) STAY AT THE ALTAR AND IMMEDIATELY get the **water cruet off the altar** and stand by the altar, (3) give the water cruet to the priest or deacon and wait for the priest or deacon to hand it back to you, (4) take the water cruet to the credence table, (5) move to the altar and get the **towel from candle right**, (6) at the signal from the priest, step forward and wash the priest's hands, (7) when the priest hands back the towel, bow to the priest together and (8) return the towel to the credence table.

**When Singing Holy, Holy** – Candle left leads all servers to the kneelers, where they will stand until the end of Holy, Holy.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and move to communion position.

**After the Sign of Peace** – Candle left takes the **Missal** from the altar to the credence table and rejoins the servers.

**After Receiving Communion** – Candle left leads the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After All Priests, Deacons, and Communion Ministers Have Left the Altar to Give Communion to the Congregation** – (1) Take the **ablution dish** to the lower right corner of the altar and take the lid off, (2) if necessary, reassemble the priest's chalice, (3) bow to the altar, and (4) take the **priest's chalice** to the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers are to move to the altar to remove all vessels. If necessary, candle left and candle right should make a second trip to the altar to remove any remaining items.

**Processing Out** – Follow candle right up the steps. Move to the left side of candle right and stand even with him/her. Bow to the altar when the cross bearer bows. Move to the near candle stand, **remove the candle**, and follow the cross bearer. Stay even with candle right. When the cross bearer stops in the center aisle, stop, then turn and face the altar. After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

### Candle Right (4-Server Mass)

**Procession** – Process in about one full step behind the cross bearer. When you reach the front pew you may walk at normal speed. Stay to the right and even with candle left. **Place the candle** in the farther candle stand and move to Gospel position. Watch the priest. Bow to the altar and genuflect to the tabernacle with the priest. Move to your chair.

**Gospel Reading** – When the music plays after the second reading, stand and IMMEDIATELY move to Gospel position. At the end of the gospel the 4<sup>th</sup> server will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) Take **2 chalices** to the altar, (2) take the **Missal** to the altar with the **purificators** on top. Place the Missal and the purificators on the left side of the altar. Bow to the altar, then move to Gospel position and WAIT.

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) **Take a gift** to the altar, (2) move to the credence table to get the **pitcher & basin** and wait for the 4<sup>th</sup> server to join you, then (3) move together to the altar just above the bells, (4) at the signal from the priest, step forward and wash the priest's hands, (5) when the priest hands back the towel, bow to the priest together and return the pitcher and basin to the credence table.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and move to communion position.

**After Receiving Communion** – The 4<sup>th</sup> server will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers are to move to the altar to remove all vessels. If necessary, the 4<sup>th</sup> server should make a second trip to the altar to remove any remaining items.

**Processing Out** – Wait until the cross bearer removes the cross from the cross stand and moves toward the altar before starting up the steps. Move to the left side of the cross bearer and stand even with him/her. Bow to the altar when the cross bearer bows. Move to the farther candle stand, **remove the candle**, and follow the cross bearer. Stay even with candle left. When the cross bearer stops in the center aisle, stop, then turn and face the altar. After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

### Candle Right (3-Server Mass)

**Procession** – Process in about one full step behind the cross bearer. When you reach the front pew you may walk at normal speed. Stay to the right and even with candle left. **Place the candle** in the farther candle stand and move to Gospel position. Watch the priest. Bow to the altar and genuflect to the tabernacle with the priest. Move to your chair.

**Gospel Reading** – When the music plays after the second reading, stand and IMMEDIATELY move to Gospel position. At the end of the gospel candle left will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) FIRST, take the **priest's chalice** and place it on the lower left corner of the altar. (2) Take **2 chalices** to the altar, (3) then take the **Missal** to the altar with the **purificators** on top. Place the Missal and the purificators on the left side of the altar, bow to the altar, then move to Gospel position and WAIT.

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) **Take a gift** to the altar, (2) get the **pitcher, basin and towel** from the credence table and move to the altar just above the bells, (3) when candle left arrives, let him/her take the towel from the basin, (4) at the signal from the priest, step forward and wash the priest's hands, (5) when the priest hands back the towel, bow to the priest together and return the pitcher and basin to the credence table.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and move to communion position.

**After Receiving Communion** – Candle left will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers are to move to the altar to remove all vessels. If necessary, candle left and candle right should make a second trip to the altar to remove any remaining items.

**Processing Out** – Wait until the cross bearer removes the cross from the cross stand and moves toward the altar before starting up the steps. Move to the left side of the cross bearer and stand even with him/her. Bow to the altar when the cross bearer bows. Move to the farther candle stand, **remove the candle**, and follow the cross bearer. Stay even with candle left. When the cross bearer stops in the center aisle, stop, then turn and face the altar. After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Server

**Procession** – Process in about one full step behind the candles. When you reach the front pew you may walk at normal speed. Move to 4<sup>th</sup> server's Gospel position by the bells. Watch the priest. Bow to the altar and genuflect to the tabernacle with the priest. Move to your chair.

**Gospel Reading** – When the music plays after the second reading, stand and IMMEDIATELY LEAD the other servers to Gospel position. At the end of the gospel the 4<sup>th</sup> server will lead the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) FIRST, take the **priest's chalice** and place it on the lower left corner of the altar. (2) Take the last **2 chalices** to the altar and line up all the chalices. (3) Then take the **water cruets** to the altar and place it on the right side of the altar, (4) bow to the altar, then move to Gospel position and WAIT.

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) **Take a gift** to the altar, (2) move to the credence table to **get the towel** and wait for candle right to join you, then (3) move together to the TOP STEP just above the bells, (4) at the signal from the priest, step forward and wash the priest's hands, (5) when the priest hands back the towel, bow to the priest together and return the towel to the credence table. Fold the towel and put it on top of the pitcher. **DO NOT** place the towel in the basin where it will get wet.

**When Singing Holy, Holy** – 4<sup>th</sup> server LEADS all servers to the kneelers, where they will stand until the end of Holy, Holy.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and move to communion position.

**After the Sign of Peace** – The 4<sup>th</sup> server takes the **Missal** from the altar to the credence table and rejoins the servers.

**After Receiving Communion** – The 4<sup>th</sup> server leads the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers move to the altar to remove all vessels. If necessary, the 4<sup>th</sup> server should make a second trip to the altar to remove any remaining items.

**Processing Out** – Follow candle left up the steps. Move to the left side of candle left and stand even with him/her. Bow to the altar when the cross bearer bows. Follow the candles off the right side of the altar. When the candle bearers stop in the center aisle, stop, then turn and face the altar. . After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

## THURIFER - 4<sup>th</sup> Server

### (Solemn Mass With **Incense** If Deacon Is Present)

**Procession** – Procession starts IMMEDIATELY when the music starts. Thurifer processes in holding the thurible and the boat, leading the servers and with the incense already burning. When you reach the front pew, you may walk at normal speed. Thurifer moves to the right side of the altar above the steps in “hand-washing position” and waits for the priest. Thurifer does NOT genuflect, only bows with the priest and ministers. Hand the thurible over to the priest after he kissed the altar and when he finished incensing the altar and the cross, take the thurible and the boat back to the lower sacristy.

**Gospel Reading** – During the second reading, the thurifer goes to the sacristy and gets the prepared thurible and the boat. Stand before the credence table area and watch the priest. When the second reading is finished (but before the Alleluia starts), take the thurible to the priest’s chair, give the boat to the priest and open the thurible, so he can put incense in it. The priest hands the thurible back to the thurifer. At this moment, cross goes up to the priest’s chair, gets the boat from the thurifer and takes the boat back to the sacristy. The thurifer steps back with the thurible and after the deacon received his blessing and got the Gospel book from the altar, the thurifer leads the deacon in a short procession around the altar (from left to right) ending at the ambo. The thurifer stands at the ambo (toward the wall not to block the path to the ambo) and gives the thurible to the deacon after the people acclaim: “Glory to you, O Lord”. The deacon incenses the Book of Gospels and hands the thurible back to the thurifer. The thurifer then STEPS BACK and stands at the wall between the large cross and the priest’s chair keeping a distance from the deacon and not blocking the view of the priest. When the Gospel reading is finished and the priest and deacon have bowed to the altar, the thurifer takes the thurible back to the lower sacristy and joins the rest of the servers behind the credence table. (Candle right already led the servers back to the credence table.)

**After the Homily** – When the Creed begins move back to the chairs by the altar.

**Before the Gifts are Brought Forward** – (1) Take the **priest’s chalice** and place it on the lower left corner of the altar FIRST. (2) Take the last **2 chalices** to the altar and line up all the chalices. (3) Then take the **water cruet** to the altar and place it on the right side of the altar, (4) bow to the altar, then go to the sacristy to GET THE THURIBLE and the boat. Stand before the credence table area and watch the priest. (The remaining servers help the priest and deacon to receive the gifts.)

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – When all the gifts have been placed on the altar, go to “hand-washing position” and wait there with the thurible and the boat. At the signal from the priest, go up to the altar, give the boat to the priest and open the thurible, so he can put incense in it. Give the thurible to the priest, receive the boat, step back and stand on the LEFT SIDE of candle right (who is waiting there prepared for hand washing). After the priest finished incensing the offerings, the altar and the cross and the deacon incensed the priest and the people, get the thurible from the deacon and return the thurible and the boat to the sacristy. The thurifer then joins the other servers at the chairs.

**When Singing Holy, Holy** – 4<sup>th</sup> server leads all servers to the kneelers, where they will stand until the end of Holy, Holy.

**After Singing the Great Amen** – Stand and move to communion position.

**After the Sign of Peace** – The 4<sup>th</sup> server takes the **Missal** from the altar to the credence table and rejoins the servers.

**After Receiving Communion** – The 4<sup>th</sup> server leads the servers to the chairs behind the credence table.

**Clearing Off the Altar** – When the priest sits down after communion, all servers move to the altar to remove all vessels. If necessary, the 4<sup>th</sup> server should make a second trip to the altar to remove any remaining items.

**Processing Out** – Follow candle left up the steps. Move to the left side of candle left and stand even with him/her. Bow to the altar when the cross bearer bows. Follow the candles off the right side of the altar. When the candle bearers stop in the center aisle, stop, then turn and face the altar. After the priest bows/genuflects, turn and process at a normal speed out to the gathering area.

## THURIFER - 4<sup>th</sup> Server

### (Solemn Mass With **Incense** If Deacon Is NOT Present)

**After the Gifts are Brought Forward** – At the signal from the priest, go up to the altar, give the boat to the priest and open the thurible, so he can put incense in it. Give the thurible to the priest, receive the boat and PUT THE BOAT ON THE DEACON’S CHAIR. Go forward and stand on the LEFT SIDE of candle right (who is waiting there prepared for hand washing). After the priest finished incensing the offerings, the altar, and the cross, go to the priest and get the thurible from him, (1) STEP BACK 3-4 steps toward the choir, (2) turn to the priest and bow, (3) INCENSE THE PRIEST using the “3x2 swing” pattern, and (4) bow to the priest again. Then go to the RIGHT SIDE of the sanctuary in front of the altar, motion to the people on the right side to stand up, and INCENSE THE PEOPLE on that side the same way you incensed the priest (bow, incense using the “3x2 swing” pattern, then bow again). Go over to the LEFT SIDE of the sanctuary, motion to the people to stand up and incense them the same way. When finished, take the boat from the deacon’s chair and return it together with the thurible to the sanctuary. Join the other servers at the chairs.