

SAINT EDWARD ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Being an Altar Server	5
General Requirements	5
Training	5
Practice	6
Conduct	6
Attendance	6
Dress and Appearance	6
General Conduct	7
Rules for an Altar Server to Remember	8
Scheduling	8
Posture and Gestures when Serving	9
Glossary of Terms	12
Color of Vestments	15
Holy Mass and Degrees of Solemnity	16
Low Mass	16
High Mass	16
Solemn High Mass	17
Solemn Pontifical Mass	17
General Altar Server Instruction	18
Before Mass	18
ProceSSIONAL	18
The Liturgy of the Word	19
The Liturgy of the Eucharist	19
Recessional	20
After Mass	21
Specific Altar Server Positions and Duties	22
Positions and Duties at a Low Mass	22
Acolyte	22

Acolyte 1 (Book Bearer)	22
Acolyte 2 (Bells)	23
In the Case of only One Server at a Low Mass	24
In the Case of more than Two Servers at a Low Mass	24
Positions and Duties at a High Mass	25
Master of Ceremonies (MC)	25
Crucifer (Cross Bearer/Head Server)	26
Acolyte	27
Acolyte 1 (Book Bearer)	27
Acolyte 2 (Bells)	27
Thurifer and Boat Bearer	28
In the Case of only Two Servers at a Weekend or Holy Day Mass	30
In the Case of only One Server at a Weekend or Holy Day Mass	30
In the Case of more than Three Servers at a High Mass without Incense	30
Positions and Duties at a Solemn High Mass	31
Torch Bearers	31
Positions and Duties at a Solemn Pontifical Mass	31
Altar Server's Prayer before Mass	32

INTRODUCTION

Saint Edward Parish is deeply grateful for your acceptance and commitment to be an Altar Server. Your service and dedication are important facets to our parish life. Serving Father at the Altar is a great privilege and this handbook will help you learn the responsibilities, expectations and procedures.

The place of the Altar Server in liturgical celebrations remains one of prominence and distinction. The Altar Server retains a genuine and vital role in the liturgical assembly. Your role, through your actions and conduct, is to bring the assembly to a fuller understanding of the liturgy and a greater love for God. You have a place of honor at Mass, because you assist the Priest in many ways. Your behavior and accomplishment are signs of your faith and your love for God and God's people.

It is an extreme privilege to kneel so close to the Altar as our loving Savior, Jesus Christ, becomes truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. In the presence of our King it is both wise and necessary for you to perform all assigned duties with attention, dignity and reverence.

While it is always important to participate in Mass, it is especially so for the Altar Server. You are setting the example for the rest of the congregation. Therefore, the Priest expects full and active participation in the Mass.

Attend to every action of the Divine Liturgy as a team – all serving Holy Mass in the same manner and style as your companion Altar Servers. As you participate as instructed, you will enter into a fuller participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass while assisting the Celebrant.

BEING AN ALTAR SERVER

General Requirements

At Saint Edward Parish, all registered parishioners who are young gentlemen and ladies and, who have received first Holy Communion, are welcome to begin service at the Altar. I encourage Servers to participate through their senior year of high school, and we welcome your participation during college breaks. Adult Servers are also welcome to participate, especially if they serve in a proper ministerial role.

Training

All candidates must read this handbook and attend one training session before their service can begin. We will hold training sessions periodically throughout the year, but Servers can also request training from the Pastor.

Practice

We will hold practice at regular intervals. Practices give every Server the occasion to improve their current skills as well as the opportunity to learn new ones. Some practices will be mandatory for all Servers. Practices are mandatory when there is significant new information, when there are liturgical changes, or in anticipation for a major special Mass or liturgy (i.e. the Easter Vigil or Eucharistic Processions).

CONDUCT

Attendance

Failing to show when you are scheduled places an unfair burden on the other Servers, and disrespects the Altar Server Ministry. Please be attentive to the schedule and show up when it's your designated time to serve.

Altar Servers must arrive early to prepare for Mass. It is important to arrive before your designated serving time, a minimum of 15 minutes prior to start of Mass, especially on weekends and Holy Days of Obligation, because there are several duties that a Server must perform before Mass. Additionally, there may be some additional instructions regarding that day's liturgy that the Priest, Master of Ceremonies, or the Head Server may need to give to the Servers.

Altar Servers who are not scheduled for a particular Mass should check with the Priest before serving. In case of necessity, please be prepared to serve even if you are not on the schedule.

Dress and Appearance

When serving at Holy Mass, the parish provides Altar Servers with white Albs. Boy Servers may wear the traditional black cassock and white surplice, if one is available.

All Servers are expected to wear their "Sunday best" at all Masses. Modesty should be preferred over fashion. **Remember, you are in the Sanctuary when Christ is made present on the Altar. Dress accordingly.**

The following are some basic dress code requirements:

1. Shirt or blouse: a white shirt or white T-shirt with no collar, no writings, and no designs (a light colored solid shirt might also suffice). Bright or heavy colors and designs are distracting to the congregation because they show through the Albs, which are made from a lightweight material.
2. Pants or skirt: Wear nice black dress pants, slacks, or skirt; (khakis may also be suitable as well as other colors). Remember, what you wear will be seen through the Alb.
Absolutely no jeans.

3. Shoes: Wear nice simple shoes (dress shoes are preferred in either black or dark brown); **NO thongs, flip-flops, high-heels or sandals; No visible toes**; (other colored dress shoes may also be suitable).
4. Jewelry: NO excessively dangly earrings or bracelets.

Young ladies wearing makeup should prefer modesty. In the past, Albs were stained with makeup. Please don't apply makeup so that it is distracting or so that it is heavy enough to stain vestments.

Short hair is strongly preferred for boys. Long hair for boys or girls must be very neatly presented so as not to fall into or on any sacramental. Neutral colors are preferred for hair accessories.

** If dress code requirements present undue hardship on a Server or their family, please discreetly bring it to the attention of the Pastor so that he can make appropriate accommodations.*

General Conduct

Parents and Servers must understand that serving at Mass is a great privilege that demands the Altar Server display model behavior, manners and most especially reverence.

Every parish, and its Priest, hopes that every Server enjoys their work of dedicated service, and that they have fun while doing so. But while there is a proper time for camaraderie and relaxed behavior, there is also a proper time for prayerful silence, diligence and attentiveness.

From the moment you vest in your Alb to the moment you hang them back up, you should put on your "game face." This means you should harness your energy and enthusiasm and direct it toward serving the Priest – who himself is serving in *persona Christi* – in the type of dignified manner that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass deserves.

You should ask yourself how you would behave if you were helping your principal or your grandparent. Now, ask yourself how you should behave when you are serving Mass – where Christ is made present on the Altar.

Remember, when you are an Altar Server you are closer to the Tabernacle than anyone except Father ... and Jesus is right there!

With so many preparations before Holy Mass, the Priest depends a great deal on the Altar Servers' parents to make sure that their children are prepared to serve Mass properly – and to correct their behavior, when appropriate.

We cannot stress enough that if you are going to be an Altar Server, you will need to act in a very reverent and dignified manner. In other words, you should act just as Father!

Does Father whisper to his friends during Mass? Does Father joke around during Mass? Does Father stretch and yawn? Does Father run in the Church? Does Father swing his legs when sitting in his chair? Does Father look around the Church during Mass? Does Father only say part of a prayer and then stop? Does Father day dream during Mass? Of course not!

You get the idea, right? And you know what? If you do these kinds of things EVERYONE in the Church knows, because EVERYONE can see you.

Do not be a distraction to people who are at Mass to honor and give thanks to God.

Rules for Altar Servers to Learn, Remember and Follow

- When you are serving Mass you must audibly say, chant or sing the appropriate prayers and responses in a reverent manner.
- There is to be absolute silence in the Sanctuary and Sacristy unless you have a pressing question to ask Father, Master of Ceremonies (MC) or Head Server.
- If you cannot pay attention or refrain from goofing off, please do not serve that day.
- You should not be in the Sacristy or Work Sacristy during Mass unless you have a particular job that needs doing at that very moment.
- There should never be any horseplay in the Church building. Period.
- There is no reason for there ever to be more than three Servers around the Credence Table at any time.
- You must be dressed appropriately to serve. No exceptions.
- Remember, you are obligated to keep the Eucharistic Fast, which is exactly one hour before the start of Holy Mass.
- Usually, there is one Head Server or an MC assigned to lead the Servers each Mass. They are in charge! Do not argue with them or any other Server about jobs at Mass. In the event that there is not a Head Server or Master of Ceremonies assigned, the oldest and/or most experienced Server at the Mass is in charge.
- Any Altar Server who criticizes another Server, or in any way acts uncharitably toward a fellow Server, risks having his or her privileges to serve taken away. It is the Head Server or MC's job to correct any mistakes, not yours. If you have a concern with the way another Server is serving, privately talk with the Head Server, MC, or Father. There will be zero tolerance about violations of this rule.

Scheduling

In general, the Church Office, or someone the Pastor appoints as Server Coordinator, will compile and publish schedules for serving weekday and weekend Masses. I expect all Servers to adhere to the schedule. In case of an emergency, it is the responsibility of the Server and their parents to find a replacement for the Mass they were scheduled to serve.

Though there is a published schedule, all Altar Servers may serve at any regular weekday or weekend Mass they wish, provided there is enough space.

POSTURE AND GESTURES WHEN SERVING

Posture is how you are using the parts of your body at a particular time. An Altar Server has to carry out a number of different actions at Mass, and so there are a number of different postures. Know what you are to do while serving, and when you are to do it. Always do things smoothly. If you make a mistake, don't get flustered.

Bowing

When you bow to someone or something at Liturgies it should be a smooth forward inclining of your head and shoulders, or your entire waist. Never walk and bow at the same time: stop before bowing. There are two types of bowing, the bow of the head and the bow of the body as described below:

- Simple Bow – This bow is a slow nod of the head and shoulders, made when:
 1. You hear the name of Jesus or Mary.
 2. After you complete a task for Father, you should reverently make a Simple Bow to him with your head and shoulders. Remember, though you are to bow to the Celebrant, the Celebrant (standing in the Person of Christ) does not bow to you.
- Profound Bow – This bow is made from the waist with hands folded (you should look at your shoes). It should be made slowly and reverently when:
 1. Crossing the Altar if the Blessed Sacrament is not present.
 2. During the Creed at the words “by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

Eyes

During Mass always look towards the place where the action is happening: the Celebrant's Chair (Sedilia), the Ambo or the Altar. When a Lector is reading the Holy Scriptures, you should be looking at the Lector. During the Gospel, you should stand, turn and face the Priest or Deacon, if one is present.

Genuflecting

When you genuflect, keep your hands in front of your chest while you go down on your **right** knee. Keep your body straight and rise to the standing position. Be sure that your Alb does not trip you on the way down or up.

As a rule, if the Blessed Sacrament is reposed in the Tabernacle, a genuflection is made before and after Mass and outside of Mass whenever passing in front of the tabernacle. ***Exception: If you are carrying something, you are to make a Simple Bow instead of Genuflecting.***

If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the Altar for Adoration, you should genuflect on both knees (called a Double Genuflection).

Giving and receiving

When you give something to Father, try to use your right hand. When you receive something from Father, try to use your left hand. (Remember to place your free hand on your sternum.)

Hands

The position of your hands changes depending on the current part of Mass and the function that you are performing. Please note the following positions:

- Folding of Hands in Prayer - Unless you are sitting down or carrying something (like a Candle), keep your hands joined in the prayer position in front of your chest, palm-to-palm, fingers together and pointing upward with your thumbs crossed, right over left. Keep your hands high up on your chest. If you are carrying something in one hand, hold the other hand flat on your sternum.
- Making a large sign of the Cross – Place left hand on your sternum, place fingers of right hand on forehead, then just above the left hand, then the left shoulder, then the right, and finally return your hand to the folded position. (Your palm should always remain facing your body.)
- Making a small sign of the Cross – Fingers together and facing to your left, use your thumb to make the sign of the cross, keeping the palm of your hand open and facing you. This occurs during the proclamation of the Gospel.
- Position of hands when holding something – Place your free hand on sternum, with your thumb apart from your fingers facing up toward your chin.
- Position of hands during Procession – Folded in prayer, unless you are carrying something.
- Striking your breast for the Confiteor – Place your left hand on your sternum as above and lightly tap your chest with your right hand held in a slightly cupped manner.

Kneeling

Both knees on the floor or step, back straight, head held up, and your hands folded in prayer.

Reverencing the Altar

During Mass, before and after you complete a task at the Altar itself, you should make a Profound Bow to the Altar by bending at your waist.

Sitting

Sit down on your chair carefully and gracefully. Once you are seated, sit tall and do not slouch. Place both feet firmly on the floor, keep your back straight and your palms flat on your thighs in a relaxed manner. *Note: Unless otherwise instructed, all Altar Servers sit after the Celebrant sits.*

Standing

Always stand up straight with both feet firmly on the floor six to eight inches apart. This will give you balance and comfort at the same time. It is important that you not lock your knees. Do not lean against the furniture or against the walls. Unless you are holding something, fold your

hands in prayer. *Note: Unless otherwise instructed, all Altar Servers stand when the Celebrant stands.*

Turning

When turning, you should do so slowly. When there are two Altar Servers turning together, always turn in toward each other.

Walking

Always walk with your back straight and head held straight and high, your hands folded in prayer. Do not rush the pace but be deliberate. The cross-bearer (Crucifer) always sets the pace in Processions, unless there's a Thurifer. ***When walking in pairs, act in unison. Remember you are a team!***

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ablution Cup – covered dish of water on the side of the tabernacle used by the Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Ministers to wash their fingers after distributing Communion.

Alb – A long white vestment, which the Bishop, Priest or Deacon wears under a chasuble or dalmatic for Mass. Altar Servers and other Ministers at the Altar also wear the Alb. The white color signifies that we have been washed in Baptism.

Altar – The sacred table in the Sanctuary on which the Holy Sacrifice occurs.

Ambo (Lectern/Pulpit) – The platform where the readings and homily take place.

Ambry – A cabinet which holds the holy oils for Baptism, Confirmation, and the Anointing of the Sick.

Amice - A rectangular piece of white linen the Bishop, Priests or Deacon wears around the neck and shoulders under the Alb to cover any garment worn underneath.

Aspergillum – A special small perforated container with a handle that is used to sprinkle holy water.

Aspersorium – A small bucket containing holy water which is sprinkled using an aspergillum.

Baptismal Font – The pool of holy water in which new Christians are baptized, according to Jesus' command, as a sign of new covenant with God. Often the baptismal font stands at the entrance to the church, as a reminder that we enter into life with Christ by passing through the water of baptism.

Biretta – An academic hat Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Seminarians wear during certain parts of the Mass.

Book of Gospels – The book which contains the Gospel readings. The Deacon usually carries the Book in Procession and places on the Altar.

Burse – A square fabric folder for holding the corporal.

Cassock – Floor length black robe the clergy and boy Servers wear. On holy days, Servers may wear the red cassock.

Celebrant – The Priest or Bishop who presides at the Eucharist (“celebrates”). The Celebrant is vested in a stole, maniple and chasuble of the liturgical color of the day or season.

Chalice – Metal cup (either gold or silver) which holds the wine and water that is transformed into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ at the Consecration.

Chalice Veil – The cloth that covers the chalice and paten up to the Offertory and after Communion. Its color is chosen by the liturgical day or season.

Chasuble – A vestment the Celebrant wears during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Its color is chosen by the liturgical day or season. The Chasuble represents the virtue of charity which ‘covers all’.

Ciborium – A large cup or container of precious metal with a cover of the same material which will hold the Body of Jesus after the Consecration for distribution of Holy Communion.

Cincture – Belt-like band the Priest wears over a cassock or Alb, representing the virtue of chastity.

Communion Cups – Gold plated cups to distribute the Blood of Christ.

Cope – A long ceremonial cape a Bishop, Priest or Deacon wears during some Liturgical Ceremonies.

Corporal – A large white linen cloth, usually with a cross in the center, which protects particles of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus from falling to the Altar and the cloths that cover it. The Priest places it in the center of the Altar and then places the bread and wine on top of it during the Consecration. The Priest then folds it to protect any particles.

Credence Table – Table that holds items needed for the celebration of Mass.

Crosier – The pastoral staff which the Bishop carries.

Crucifer – The bearer of the Processional cross (from the Latin “crux” (cross) and “ferre” (to carry)).

Cruets – Vessels that hold the water and wine.

Dalmatic – Vestment the Deacon wears, which matches the chasuble in the color of the season or day. It is similar to the Chasuble but with sleeves.

Elevation – Holding up the consecrated bread and wine for all to see.

Epiclesis – When the Priest places his hands over the chalice and calls down the Holy Spirit.

Gift Table – Table in the back center aisle where we place the bread and wine until needed at the Offertory.

Humeral Veil – A wide scarf a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon wears over the shoulders, which they use to carry the sacred vessels or the Blessed Sacrament.

Incense – Perfumed grains burned during special liturgies, which symbolize our prayers rising to God.

Incense Boat – The container that holds the unburned Incense. It also contains a spoon.

Incensation – To gently swing the Thurible (filled with burning Incense) toward or around an object or person, symbolic of purifying our intentions or our space.

Lavabo and Basin – The pitcher and bowl the Celebrant uses to cleanse his hands.

Lectionary – The book which contains the Sacred Scripture readings.

Luna – A thin circular receptacle with a glass face that holds the Consecrated Host during Adoration and Benediction. It slides into the monstrance on a little track.

Maniple – A shorter stole the Bishop, Priest, or Deacon wears on the left arm, which symbolizes the service of Christ. Its use is optional.

Miter – A triangle shape hat that the Bishop wears. As it is the Bishop's crown, it is a symbol of his authority.

Monstrance – Container for the host in exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Its outer casing represents the rays of Heaven.

Nave – Main body of the Church where the congregation worships, whether by kneeling, sitting or standing during prayer.

Pall – Square piece of cardboard or plastic which is covered by linen and used as a protective cover for the chalice.

Paschal Candle – A large blessed Candle the church uses during the Easter season, baptisms and funerals, and throughout the Liturgical year.

Paten – Flat plate of precious metal on which the large host rests for the Bishop or Priest. Altar Servers also use other Patens with handles for the distribution of Holy Communion to the Faithful.

Processional Cross – Sacred cross carried in and out of the Mass and during other Liturgical Functions.

Purificator – A long narrow piece of folded linen cloth with a red cross, which the Priest, Deacon, and Extraordinary Ministers use to wipe the chalice after someone drinks from it.

Pyx – Small metal container which holds consecrated hosts when visiting the sick or homebound.

Roman Missal – Book of prayers and instructions the Bishop or Priest uses during the Liturgy.

Sacrarium – Small sink with a drain going directly into the ground, which the priest uses to rinse out linens and dispose of holy water.

Sanctuary – A raised area in the front of the church. The Sanctuary is a holy space because this is where the offers the Sacrifice of the Mass, where we read the Word of God, and where the Tabernacle is located. One should approach the Sanctuary with great respect.

Sanctuary Bells – Bells that the Altar Server rings during the consecration at Mass.

Stole – Long narrow scarf-like cloth, a vestment the Priest wears over his neck as a symbol of Priestly authority. Bishops, Priests and Deacons wear it in the liturgy. The priest wears the Stole with both ends in front; the Deacon wears it crosswise on one shoulder and crossing the chest fastened at the opposite hip.

Surplice – A wide sleeved white garment the Clergy (and some Altar Servers) wear/s over the cassock.

Tabernacle – Gold “safe” where the Blessed Sacrament is reposed.

Thurible – The pierced metal container in which the Priest burns Incense. It is suspended on a long chain for carrying and swinging, allowing the fragrant smoke to rise.

Thurifer – One of the Altar Servers of the liturgy who handles the Incense.

Transubstantiation – During the Consecration, the Priest blesses the bread and wine and calls down the Holy Spirit to change them into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Vesting – Putting on the necessary vestments for Mass.

COLOR OF VESTMENTS

Black – Used during funerals, symbolizing mourning and sorrow.

Green – Used during Ordinary Time, symbolizing Life, Growth and Hope.

Gold – More festive than white, which the Church uses on more solemn days such as Easter and Christmas. It also symbolizes Joy, Triumph and the Resurrection. Gold may replace green, white or red vestments.

Red – Used on Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday), Good Friday, Pentecost, feasts of the Apostles, Evangelists and Martyrs. Red symbolizes the Holy Spirit and the blood of martyrs.

Rose - Symbolizes joy in the midst of a penitential season (rose being between violet and white). The Priest may wear it only on two days in the year: Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent). The names of these Sundays are from the first words of the Entrance Antiphon for each day: Gaudete in Domino (“Rejoice in the Lord”) and Laetare Jerusalem (“Rejoice, Jerusalem”), respectively.

Violet – Used during Lent and Advent, symbolizing Penance, Atonement and Expiation.

White – Masses of Easter, Christmas season, Feasts and Memorials of Jesus, Mary, the Angels, Saints who were not martyrs, Weddings, and Funerals; symbolizes Purity, Holiness, Joy, Triumph, and the Resurrection.

HOLY MASS AND DEGREES OF SOLEMNITY

Solemnity refers to the state or quality of something being serious or dignified. Occasionally, because of an important Feast Day, we celebrate some Masses with more solemnity than others. For example, we would not celebrate a weekday Mass with no special commemoration (the life of a Saint for instance) with more solemnity than Christmas Day. Rather, Christmas would be the perfect opportunity for increasing the solemnity of the Mass. We do this by adding music, incense, chanting, Processions, and other ceremonies that the Church gives us to increase our awareness and gives us a greater sense of the importance of the day.

Added solemnity to the Mass is very important because it builds and strengthens our faith, but it cannot always be done. There are two reasons for this. First, the effect on us would be lost if we did it all the time. Second, greater solemnity is practically difficult in most circumstances because it requires more Altar Servers to perform additional tasks. For this reason, the Church does distinguish between different types of Masses and how we should celebrate them. Please note the different types and understand their differences.

Low Mass

We generally celebrate a Low Mass as a ‘daily’ or ‘weekday’ Mass. It requires at least 2 Altar Server, but the Priest may use more. In the Low Mass, we observe the following protocols:

- Two lighted Candles on the Altar.
- We prepare and place the Roman Missal and Lectionary in their proper places.
- We prepare the Credence Table with Water and Wine Cruets, the Lavabo, Basin, Towel, and a Ciborium filled with hosts (if needed).
- The Celebrant carries the Veiled Chalice in and out of the Church.
- The Entrance Procession is simple, beginning from the side of the church and not from the back. We do not use the Processional Cross and Candles. The Recessional occurs in the same manner as the Processional, just in reverse.
- We never use Incense.
- The Celebrant may sing the Mass at various parts but usually there are no hymns.
- The Priest may say prayers at the foot of the Altar before the Recessional.
- Note: While the specific duties of the Altar Servers do not change too much, Servers may have to share some tasks in the case of fewer Servers.

High Mass (Sung Mass)

High Mass is generally celebrated as a ‘Sunday’ or ‘Weekend’ Mass. It is also generally celebrated on Holy Days or important Feasts. This Mass is the experience of most Catholics. For High Mass, there are at least 3 Altar Servers, who share very specific roles, but more Servers may be present. In the High Mass, we observe the following protocols:

- Six lighted Candles on the Altar.
- We prepare and place the Roman Missal and Lectionary in their proper places.
- The Processional for High Mass begins in the back with the Servers bearing the Processional Cross and Candles. The Recessional occurs in the same manner as the Processional, just in reverse.
- We prepare the Credence Table with Water and Wine Cruets, the Lavabo, Basin, Towel, and a Ciborium filled with hosts (if needed).
- We place the Veiled Chalice on the Altar before Mass and it remains on the Altar until after Holy Communion.
- The Priest may use Incense provided there is at least one additional Altar Server.
- The Celebrant may sing various parts of the Mass and there is usually an opening and closing hymn.
- Note: While the specific duties of the Altar Servers do not change too much, Servers may have to share some tasks in the case of fewer Servers.

Solemn High Mass

Solemn High Mass is usually reserved for important Feast Days and Solemnities, such as Christmas and Easter. Solemn High Mass is similar to High Mass in several ways, but it includes more specific roles with the number of Altar Servers ranging from 6 to 12. In the Solemn High Mass, we observe the following protocols:

- Six lighted Candles on the Altar.
- We prepare and place the Roman Missal and Lectionary in their proper places.
- The Processional for High Mass begins in the back with the Servers bearing the Processional Cross and Candles. The Recessional occurs in the same manner as the Processional, just in reverse.
- We prepare the Credence Table with Water and Wine Cruets, the Lavabo, Basin, Towel, a Ciborium filled with hosts (if needed), and the Veiled Chalice.
- We place the Book of the Gospels on the Altar before Mass.
- We use Incense.
- We may use torches in numbers of 2, 4, or 6.
- The Priest sings the Mass at various parts and we sing an opening and closing hymn.
- Note: While the specific duties of the Altar Servers do not change too much, Servers may have to share some tasks in the case of fewer Servers.

Solemn Pontifical Mass

We celebrate the Solemn Pontifical Mass in the same manner as the Solemn High Mass, expect that the Bishop is the Celebrant. In the Solemn Pontifical Mass, we observe the following additional protocols:

- Seven lighted Candles on the Altar.

- The number of Torches increases to 8.
- 1 to 2 Altar Servers will act as Vimps. These Servers bear a Vimpa (a veil hung around the shoulders and clasped in the front) throughout Mass for carrying the Bishop's Crosier and Miter.
- The Bishop's personal Master of Ceremonies will assign Servers their roles at all Solemn Pontifical Masses.

It is important to note that while the above distinctions are standard, there may be additions or subtractions due to the Liturgical Season, Feast Day or for another reason. In such occasions, the Celebrant or Master of Ceremonies will do his best to explain what has changed and how we will do it.

GENERAL ALTAR SERVER INSTRUCTIONS

Before Mass

- Servers should arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start of Mass, unless otherwise instructed.
- All Servers should wash their hands before vesting for Mass.
- Servers should vest in an Alb. Ideally, the Alb will touch the top of the shoes.
- Servers should assist the Priest or Master of Ceremonies in preparing the vessels, books, etc. and setting them neatly on the Credence Table.
- Be sure to also check the sound system to make sure that it is on.
- Light the Altar Candles at least 10 minutes before the start of Mass.
- The MC, if one is present, or the Head Server, should assign positions to the Servers and review their duties.
- *For High Mass or Solemn High Mass:* Light the Processional Candles several minutes before Mass.

Processional

- The Celebrant will instruct the Altar Servers when to line up for Mass.
- *For Low Mass:* The Servers lead the Procession from the side of the Church. Having stopped at the doors to the Church, the Server closest to the Bell will ring it (when the Celebrant says) and walks with the other Server(s) to the middle of the Nave. The Servers then stop at the base of the Sanctuary (leaving enough room between them for the Celebrant), genuflect with the Celebrant, and enter the Sanctuary (right foot first).
- *For High Mass or Solemn High Mass:* The Crucifer leads the Procession (unless we use Incense then the Thurifer leads) to the back of the Church and waits for the Bell to ring. The Acolytes will line up on either side of the Crucifer. All other Servers line up behind the Crucifer. The Celebrant rings the Bell signifying the beginning of Mass. Upon reaching the Sanctuary steps, the Crucifer and Acolytes will reverence the Altar with a Simple Bow and enter the Sanctuary (right foot first). The Servers with the Processional Cross and Candles will take them to their proper places. Additional Servers, who are

carrying other items, enter the Sanctuary in the same way. Servers without items will genuflect before entering the Sanctuary.

- Unless otherwise instructed, all Servers will go to their proper seats and remain standing until the Celebrant sits.
- *Diagram for the Processional at a High or Solemn High Mass:*

Saint Mary

Altar

Saint Joseph

Thurifer (if present)

Boat Bearer (if present)

Acolyte – Crucifer – Acolyte

Torch Bearers (if present)

Other Servers (if present)

MC (if present)

Other Ministers/Clerics (if present)

Celebrant

The Liturgy of the Word

- The MC, if one is present, or the Head Server will set the Missal to the appropriate page.
- Depending on the type Mass, Acolyte 1 (the Book Bearer) will take the Missal to the Celebrant at the proper time.
- When the Gospel is proclaimed, all Servers will stand at the same time as the Celebrant and turn to face the Ambo.
- All Servers sit for the Homily, unless instructed otherwise.
- If the Creed and Prayers of the Faithful are said, all Servers stand and give a Profound Bow at the words of the Creed, “by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.” *Note: On Christmas Day, you make a genuflection.*
- If the Creed and Prayers of the Faithful are not said then the Servers immediately begin preparing the Altar.
- Every Altar Server will participate in the responses at Mass.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Prepare the Altar in the usual way with every Altar Server careful to observe their proper roles and duties.
- When Father says, “Pray, brothers and sisters...” all Servers go to their designated places to kneel, but do not do so until after the Sanctus (Holy, Holy).
- The Altar Servers do not stand again until after the Great Amen.
- During the Eucharistic Prayer, every Altar Server will pay attention to the prayers and conduct themselves properly.
- During the Epiclesis (when Father places his hands over the chalice calling down the Holy Spirit), ring the bells once.
- At the Elevation of the Host and chalice, ring the bells three times. There should be a noticeable break between each ring.
- At the Sign of Peace, the Celebrant will approach each Server and give the Pax (Peace) by placing his hands over their shoulders. Altar Servers should receive this by extending their arms and placing the palm of their hands upwards. After the Celebrant says, “Peace be with you”, your response is “And with your spirit.”
- Ring the bells once more when the Celebrant receives the Precious Blood.
- For reception of Holy Communion, the Acolytes will receive first, holding the Patens themselves. The Acolytes will hold the Patens for the other Servers.
- **All Altar Servers will receive Holy Communion on the tongue.**
- Unless you are assisting Holy Communion by holding the Patens, Servers are to return to their seats and kneel until the Celebrant returns to his chair to sit. *Note: Some Servers may have to assist in clearing the Altar. If you are asked to do this, please remember to be especially respectful and to return to kneeling when your task is complete.*
- After Communion, take the Patens to the Altar to be purified and then return them to the Credence Table. Servers then assist with purifying the Vessels by bringing the Water Cruet to the Celebrant and pouring water over his fingers. After the Priest purifies the Vessels, the Servers remove them from the Altar.
- After Father closes the Missal, a Server removes it with its stand and places it on the side table.
- When the Celebrant returns to his seat, the Altar Servers will sit as well.
- The Celebrant will stand for the Post Communion Prayer, and when he says “Let us pray”, take the Missal to him.
- After the final blessing, the Servers take their items (if present), leave the Sanctuary, and line up for the Recessional. **Please remember to wait for the Celebrant to ascend the Altar before leaving the Sanctuary.**

Recessional

- The Recessional occurs in the same manner as the Processional, just in reverse. However, no matter the type of Mass, Altar Servers will line up in the Nave, turn towards the Altar and pause until the Celebrant has exited the Sanctuary and revered the Altar. Altar Servers reverence the Altar at the same time as the Celebrant with either a Genuflection or a Simple Bow (if you are holding something).

- *For Low Mass:* The Altar Servers turn to the side and lead the Recessional back to the Sacristy where they reverence the Cross with the Celebrant. The Celebrant will then bless the Servers.
- *For High Mass or Solemn High Mass:* Everyone turns backward and proceeds down the Nave. Upon reaching the end of the Nave, the Altar Servers line up in front of the Statue of Saint Edward, standing next to each other and facing the Altar. The Crucifer with the Processional Cross stands in the Center. The Celebrant will then reverence the Cross and Bless the Servers, at which point all Servers return to the Sacristy.
- We never use Incense in the Recessional.
- *Diagram for the Recessional at a High or Solemn High Mass:*

Saint Mary **Altar** **Saint Joseph**

Celebrant
MC (if present)

Other Ministers/Clerics (if present)

Thurifer, Boat Bearer, and other Servers (if present)

Torch Bearers (if present)

Acolyte 2 – Crucifer – Acolyte 1

- *Diagram for Reverencing the Cross for High or Solemn High Mass:*

Statue of Saint Edward

Other Servers – Acolyte 1 – Crucifier – Acolyte 2 – Other Servers

After Mass

- After Mass, Altar Servers will assist in removing the remaining Vessels, Cruets, Lavabo, Basin, Towels, and the Lectionary (on Sundays) from the Sanctuary. Place these items neatly in the Sacristy. The Vessels, Cruets and Basin should be thoroughly washed and left to dry.
- Turn off the sound system.
- Extinguish the Altar Candles.
- After Servers accomplish these duties, they may remove their Albs and exit the Church.
Note: Hang Albs neatly and place them on their proper hangers!

SPECIFIC ALTAR SERVER POSITIONS AND DUTIES

The following describes serving positions and the duties that apply to each role. It is important to note, however, that there will be occasions when Servers will have to share roles.

POSITIONS AND DUTIES AT A LOW MASS

Acolyte

By definition, an Acolyte is a person who assists the Celebrant in a religious service. For our purposes, this means Holy Mass or other Liturgical Functions. Preferably, there are always two (2) Acolytes at each Mass and they assist the Priest directly so that he is able to pray without interruption. Servers functioning as Acolytes are responsible for the following:

Acolyte 1 (Book Bearer)

- Line up in Procession with Acolyte 2 on your left.
- Ring the Bell to start the Procession after the Celebrant gives permission.
- Process down the Side Nave and, upon reaching the Sanctuary steps, Genuflect with the Celebrant.
- Proceed into the Sanctuary (right foot first), turn 90 degrees to the right (St. Joseph Side) and walk to your seat (remain standing).
- Pick up the Missal and take it to the Celebrant immediately after he arrives at his seat for the Introit (Entrance Prayer). After the prayer, put the Missal down until the Collect, "Let us Pray". ***Note: If there is a Gloria, remain in front of the Celebrant the whole time.***
- Remember to reverence the Celebrant with a Simple Bow each time you leave his presence.
- During Altar preparation, take up additional vessels (if there are any) to the Altar from the St. Joseph side.
- Along with the Acolyte 2, take the Wine Cruet to the Celebrant, or Deacon (if one is present), with the handle facing away from you. Acolyte 2 should be on your left carrying the Water Cruet.
- After the Priest uses the Wine and Water, return to the Credence Table with the other Server and prepare the Lavabo and Basin and wait for the Celebrant to turn for the washing of his hands. When the Celebrant turns, approach the Altar from the side and pour water over his hands. Acolyte 2 should be on your left carrying the Towel.
- After the Celebrant is finished drying his hands, reverence him with a Simple Bow and place the Lavabo and Basin back on the Credence Table.
- Along with Acolyte 2, go the front step of the Altar and wait to kneel until after the Sanctus (Holy, Holy). Acolyte 2 is on your left (St. Mary Side).
- After the Celebrant receives Holy Communion, go to the Credence Table, retrieve one Paten and go back to your place. Receive Holy Communion with the paten under your chin then hold the Paten for the other Server.
- Hold the Paten for the Faithful receiving Holy Communion.

- After Holy Communion, take the Paten back to the Altar so Father can purify it then place it back on the Credence Table.
- Bring the Water Cruet to the Celebrant after he reposes the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle.
- Assist in removing the vessels as they are purified. Place all vessels neatly on the Credence Table.
- When the Celebrant says, “Let us pray”, bring the Missal to Father.
- After the Post Communion Prayer, place the Missal down and wait at your designated place.
- After the Final Blessing, wait for the Celebrant to approach the Altar and line up in Procession (facing the Altar) to the left of Acolyte 2.
- After the Celebrant is in place at the foot of the Sanctuary, reverence the Altar with a Genuflection, turn and walk down the Side Nave, this time with Acolyte 2 on your right.

Acolyte 2 (Bells)

- Line up in Procession to the right of Acolyte 1.
- Process down the Side Nave and, upon reaching the Sanctuary steps, Genuflect with the Celebrant.
- Proceed into the Sanctuary (right foot first), turn 90 degrees to the left (St. Mary Side) and walk to your seat (remain standing).
- During Altar preparation, take the Large Missal with its Stand from the table, approach the Altar from the side, and place it on the Altar.
- Proceed down to the Sanctuary floor, walk to the front of the Altar, reverence the Altar with a genuflection, and walk toward the Credence Table.
- Along with Acolyte 1, bring the Water Cruet to the Celebrant, or Deacon (if one is present), with the handle facing away from you. Acolyte 1 should be on your right carrying the Wine Cruet.
- After Father uses the Wine and Water, return to the Credence Table with the other Server and prepare the towel and wait for the Celebrant to turn for the washing of his hands. When the Celebrant turns, approach the Altar from the side and extend the towel for his use. Acolyte 1 should be on your right carrying the Lavabo and Basin.
- After the Celebrant is finished drying his hands, reverence him with a Simple Bow and place the Towel back on the Credence Table.
- Along with Acolyte 1, go to the front step of the Altar (on St. Mary’s side) and wait to kneel until after the Sanctus (Holy, Holy). Acolyte 1 is on your right (St. Joseph Side).
- **It is your job to ring the bells at the proper times during the Eucharistic Prayer:**
 - **One ring when Father places both hands over the Chalice (The Epiclesis).**
 - **Three rings when Father elevates the Sacred Host.**
 - **Three rings when he elevates the Chalice with the Precious Blood.**
 - **One ring when Father drinks the Precious Blood.**
- When it’s time to receive Holy Communion, Acolyte 1 will hold the Paten for you.
- After reception of Holy Communion, go back to your seat and kneel.
- After Father purifies the Vessels and closes the Missal, retrieve the Missal with its stand and place it back on the side table.

- After the Final Blessing, wait for the Celebrant to approach the Altar and line up in Procession (facing the Altar) to the left of Acolyte 1 – leave enough room between you and Acolyte 1 for the Celebrant.
- After the Celebrant is in place at the foot of the Sanctuary, reverence the Altar with a Genuflection, turn and walk down the Side Nave, this time with Acolyte 1 on your left.

In the Case of only One Server at a Low Mass

If there is only one Server at Low Mass, the Acolyte takes on both roles. The Server will sit on the right side of the Altar (St. Mary's side). The Celebrant will only use the Large Missal with the stand and will place it on the Altar before Mass, thus eliminating the need for a Server to take it to him. The Acolyte will still be responsible for the Cruets, Lavabo and Basin, Towel, ringing the Bells, Paten, and the Water Cruet for the purification.

In the Case of more than Two Servers at a Low Mass

If there are more than 2 Servers at Low Mass, it is the responsibility of the Servers to discuss their roles before the start of Mass.

POSITIONS AND DUTIES AT A HIGH MASS

At High Mass, there should be at least 3 Altar Servers (one Crucifer and 2 Acolytes). For more solemn occasions, or when the presence of additional Servers allows, the Celebrant can add other roles, such as Master of Ceremonies, Thurifer and Boat Bearer.

Master of Ceremonies (MC)

The Pastor may ask some men of the parish to serve in the capacity of an MC. Candidates must undergo special training by a Priest to fulfill this role so they will take on more responsibilities than an average Server. The MC is chiefly responsible for assigning duties of all Altar Servers and making sure they carry out their duties. The MC will also assist the Celebrant with his tasks. Within the context of the Mass, the MC is responsible for the following:

- Before Mass, the MC directs the Servers in preparing for Mass.
- The MC precedes the Celebrant in the Processional. When the MC reaches the Sanctuary steps, he should move slightly toward the right (St. Joseph side), giving Father room in the center.
- Receive the Celebrant's Biretta, if he is wearing one, and then genuflect with the Celebrant before entering the Sanctuary. Note: Place the Celebrant's Biretta on the Missal stand until it's time for the Celebrant to sit down.
- Open the Missal to its proper page and direct the Acolyte to the Celebrant if they miss their cue.
- Hand the Celebrant's Biretta to him, while still standing. Allow the Celebrant to sit first, reverence him with a Simple Bow, and then sit. Take Father's Biretta again after he stands.
- At the conclusion of the Prayers of the Faithful, the MC will assist in preparing the Altar.
 1. Direct the Servers which Vessels they take to the Altar.
 2. Set the Missal to its proper place.
 3. Monitor the other Servers to assist and direct them, if needed.
- **In the case of a Solemn High Mass, The MC will take the veiled Chalice to the Altar.**
- The MC will assist in turning the pages of the Missal during the Eucharistic Prayer, kneeling only for the Words of Consecration, and he will elevate the Celebrant's chasuble during the Major Elevations.
- During Communion, the MC should observe that the Consecrated Hosts are protected while providing for the needs of the Celebrant and assisting ministers, should any need arise.
- After Communion, the MC should assist in removing the Missal and the vessels after purification.
- When the Altar is clear, and the Celebrant returns to his chair, the MC hands him the Biretta.
- After the Final Blessing, once the music begins, the MC directs the movements of the other Servers as they line up in Procession. He also carries the Celebrant's Biretta to the foot of the Sanctuary. He waits to the right, just as he did at the beginning of Mass, hands the Celebrant the Biretta, genuflects with the Celebrant, and recesses out in front of the Celebrant.

- After Mass, the MC is responsible for directing the Servers in returning all items to the sacristy, extinguishing Candles, and ensuring all Servers properly hang their Albs.
- **In the Case of a High or Solemn High Mass**, the MC directs the Thurifer and Boat Bearer, (if one is present). When a Deacon is not present, the MC will also assist the Celebrant in incensing the Altar and incensing the Celebrant, other additional ministers, and the People. Note: The MC may also take on the role of Thurifer if another Server is not available.
- **In the case of only a Solemn High Mass**, the MC will also direct the movements of the Torch Bearers.

Crucifer (Head Server)

The Crucifer bears the Cross in the Procession in and out of the Church. The Server designated for this role should have experience in serving as an Acolyte. Therefore, the Crucifer is the 'Head Server' and, in the absence of an MC, will assist in directing the other Servers in their duties.

- The Crucifer leads the Procession and sets its pace when there is no Thurifer.
- Raise the Cross high with both hands, the right hand higher than the left.
- When you reach the steps of the Sanctuary, extend your hands and reverence the Altar with a Simple Bow, enter the Sanctuary (right foot first), turn 90 degrees to your right and walk to the back of the Altar. Place the Cross in its stand behind the Altar.
- **Proceed to your seat on St. Joseph Side.**
- **In the absence of an MC, assist Acolyte 1 in opening the Missal to its proper place.**
- When it is time to set the Altar, assist the Acolytes in their jobs, as the need arises. When the Altar ready, go to the foot of the Altar (St. Joseph side) and wait to kneel after the Sanctus (Holy, Holy).
- At Holy Communion, receive as normal with one of the Acolytes holding the Paten for you, then return to your seat and kneel.
- During the purifications, assist Acolyte 1 in retrieving the vessels.
- After the final blessing, you will retrieve the Cross and line up for the Recessional, facing the Altar when in your proper place. **Remember, to wait until the Celebrant has gone to the Altar before exiting the Sanctuary.**
- After the Celebrant is in place at the foot of the Sanctuary, reverence the Altar with him with a Simple Bow, turn and walk down the Nave.
- Upon reaching the end of the Nave, turn again with the other Servers so that the Celebrant can reverence the Cross.
- After the Celebrant's blessing, return to the Sacristy, place the Cross in its stand, and assist the other Servers with their after-Mass duties.

Acolyte

The role of Acolyte in a High Mass is very similar to the Low Mass (please refer to that section of this Handbook for a detailed account of those tasks and duties). However, in a High Mass, the following changes apply:

Acolyte 1 (Book Bearer)

- Assist in lighting the Processional Candles 5 minutes before Mass.
- With your Processional Candle, line up in Procession to the right of the Crucifer (St. Joseph Side).
- Process down the Nave next to the Crucifer and upon reaching the Sanctuary steps, extend your Candle and reverence the Altar with a Simple Bow.
- Proceed into the Sanctuary (right foot first), turn 90 degrees to the right and walk around the Altar to the Credence Table. Place your lit Processional Candle on the right side of the back part of the Credence Table, and go to your designated seat on St. Joseph's side.
- Pick up the Missal and bring it to the Celebrant at the proper times.
- After the Celebrant receives Holy Communion, go to the Credence Table and retrieve both Patens and go back to your place. When it's time to receive Holy Communion, give the second Paten to Acolyte 2. Receive Holy Communion with the paten under your chin then hold the Paten for the other Servers who do not have the other Paten (if other Servers are present).
- Hold the Paten for the Faithful receiving Holy Communion.
- After Holy Communion, take the Paten back to the Altar so Father can purify it then place it back on the Credence Table.
- After the Post Communion Prayer, place the Missal down and wait at your designated place.
- Grab your Processional Candle and after the Final Blessing, wait for the Celebrant to approach the Altar and line up in Procession (facing the Altar) to the right of the Crucifer.
- After the Celebrant is in place at the foot of the Sanctuary, reverence the Altar with a Simple Bow, turn and walk down the Nave (remember to always stay on the St. Joseph side).
- Upon reaching the end of the Nave, turn again with the other Servers so that the Celebrant can reverence the Cross.
- Return to the Sacristy, put out your Processional Candle and set it in its proper place, then assist the other Servers with the after-Mass duties.

Acolyte 2 (Bells)

- Assist in lighting the Processional Candles 5 minutes before Mass.
- With your Processional Candle, line up in Procession to the left of the Crucifer (St. Mary Side)
- Process down the Nave next to the Crucifer and upon reaching the Sanctuary steps, extend your Candle and reverence the Altar with a Simple Bow.
- Proceed into the Sanctuary (right foot first), turn 90 degrees to the right and walk around the Altar to the Credence Table. Place your lit Processional Candle on the left side of the back part of the Credence Table, and go to your designated seat on St. Mary's side.

- When it's time to receive Holy Communion, take the second Paten from Acolyte 1.
- Receive Holy Communion with the paten under your chin then hold the Paten for the other Servers who do not have the other Paten (if other Servers are present).
- Hold the Paten for the Faithful receiving Holy Communion.
- After Holy Communion, take the Paten back to the Altar so Father can purify it then place it back on the Credence Table.
- After Father purifies the Vessels and closes the Missal, retrieve the Missal with its stand and place it back on the side table.
- After the Post Communion Prayer, return to the Credence Table to take your Processional Candle. Following the Final Blessing, wait for the Celebrant to approach the Altar and line up in Procession (facing the Altar) to the left of the Crucifer.
- After the Celebrant is in place at the foot of the Sanctuary, reverence the Altar with a Simple Bow, turn and walk down the Nave (remember to always stay on the St. Mary side).
- Upon reaching the end of the Nave, turn again with the other Servers so that the Celebrant can reverence the Cross.
- Return to the Sacristy, put out your Processional Candle and set it in its proper place, then assist the other Servers with the after-Mass duties.

Thurifer and Boat Bearer

At some High Masses (and all Solemn High Mass), the Celebrant may ask a senior Altar Server to serve as the Thurifer, that is, the one who carries the Thurible and Boat and assists with all the Incensations. The role of Thurifer requires specific training, and careful use of the Thurible in order to carefully avoid accidents. For those serving as Thurifer, please observe the following tasks:

Before Mass

- 15 Minutes before Mass, make sure the Thurible stand and Boat are in their proper places.
- About 10 minutes before Mass, add two pieces of charcoal to the Thurible and light it.
- NOTE: You should put an extra two pieces of charcoal and the lighter near the Thurible stand in case you need to add more during the Mass.

Procession and Incensing the Altar

- About two minutes before Mass, give the Boat to the Celebrant so he can add and bless the Incense. Close the Thurible securely and the Thurifer takes their place in the Procession in front of the Crucifer. The Thurible should swing freely in your left hand during the Processional.
- **Note: An additional Server can take the place as the Boat Bearer. In this case, the Boat Bearer always accompanies the Thurifer even in Procession (to the Thurifer's right).**
- Arriving at the Sanctuary, the Thurifer should give a Simple Bow, enter the Sanctuary and go immediately to the right side of the Altar (St. Joseph Side). After the Celebrant kisses the Altar, the Thurifer ascends to the Altar, hands the Boat to the Celebrant (unless

a Boat Bearer is present), lifts the top of the Thurible, and waits for the Celebrant to impose Incense into the Thurible. Close the Thurible securely and hand it to the Celebrant, or the Deacon if one is present.

- The Celebrant will then Incense the Altar, during which time the Thurifer will back away from the Altar (unless he is also the MC).
- When the Celebrant is finished, he will hand the Thurible back to the Thurifer and the Thurifer and Boat Bearer (if present) should reverence the Celebrant with a Simple Bow, then put the Thurible and Boat on the stand.

Incensing the Gospel

- At the end of the Responsorial Psalm the Thurifer and Boat Bearer (if present) retrieve their items and wait on the St. Joseph side until the end of the Second Reading.
- After the Second Reading, the Thurifer approaches the Celebrant at his chair and charges the Thurible as before.
- The Thurifer then goes to the Ambo, making a Profound Bow in front of the Altar, and waits for the Celebrant (or the Deacon) for the Proclamation of the Gospel.
- Stand a couple of feet back from the Ambo.
- Upon reaching the Ambo, the Celebrant or Deacon will Incense the Gospel.
- After Father proclaims the Gospel, return the Thurible and Boat to the stand.
- **At a Solemn High Mass:** There may be a full Gospel Procession. In which case, there will be a practice before Mass on how to do this.

Incensing the Gifts, Altar, Priest and People

- During the Offertory, the Thurifer will go back to the stand and check to ensure there is enough charcoal in the Thurible. Add more and re-light, if necessary. Be at the Altar when the Celebrant pours the wine and water.
- Just as at the beginning of Mass, approach the Celebrant, allow him to charge the Thurible and step back so he can Incense the Chalice, Paten and Altar.
- When the Celebrant returns the Thurible to you, you Incense the Celebrant (three, double swings).
- After you Incense the Celebrant, move to the Sanctuary step in front of the Altar and signal to the people to stand. Give a Profound Bow to the people, Incense them (three, single swings), and Bow again.
- After you finish Incensing the people, go back to the stand and return to your seat (remain standing).
- Kneel with the rest of the Serves at the Eucharistic Prayer.

Incense at the Consecration (Only at Solemn High Mass)

- If using both Incense and Bells, after the Sanctus (Holy, Holy), the Thurifer will put one or two spoonfuls of Incense in the Thurible, if necessary, and process in front of the Altar to the Sanctuary Step. Kneel on the side step of the Altar (St. Joseph Side).
- Unlike the Bells, we only use Incense at the elevation of the Blessed Sacrament (three, triple swings) and the elevation of the Precious Blood (three, triple swings).

- After the Great Amen, the Thurifer stands, makes a Profound Bow, and returns the Thurible to the stand. The Thurifer returns to their seat and kneels until Communion.

Recessional

- Do not remove the Thurible from the Sanctuary. The Thurifer lines up in Procession close to the Celebrant but behind the MC, if one is present.

In the Case of only Two Servers at a Weekend or Holy Day Mass

If there are only 2 Servers on a Weekend or Holy Day, they will serve as Acolytes as at High Mass without the use of the Processional Cross or Candles.

In the Case of only One Server at a Weekend or Holy Day Mass

If there is only 1 Server on a Weekend or Holy Day, the Server will operate as an Acolyte as at Low Mass with only one Server.

In the Case of more than Three Servers at a High Mass without Incense

If we do not use Incense, and there are more than 3 Servers, it is responsibility of the Servers to discuss their roles before the start of Mass.

POSITIONS AND DUTIES AT A SOLEMN HIGH MASS

The Priest celebrates Solemn High Mass in the same way as the High Mass with the addition of Servers with specific roles. The most notable of these is the presence of Torch Bearers.

Torch Bearers

Occasionally, on more Solemn Days of the Church's Year (Christmas, Easter, etc.), Altar Servers will serve as Torch Bearers. Torches represent the light of Christ, thus their presence adds dignity and reverence to Holy Mass and other Liturgical Functions, such as Processions. Ideally, there will be 6 Torch Bearers but, if there are not enough Servers at a particular Mass, 4 or 2 are sufficient. The use of 8 Torches is a practice reserved to Masses with the Bishop (Solemn Pontifical Mass).

Torch Bearers may use their Torches during the Processional, Recessional, Gospel Procession, and the Eucharistic Prayer. The Celebrant or MC will give specific instructions to the Torch Bearers about their roles.

POSITIONS AND DUTIES AT A SOLEMN PONTIFICAL MASS

The Bishop's personal Master of Ceremonies will coordinate the Solemn Pontifical Masses even though we celebrate them in the same way as a Solemn Mass.

Altar Server's Prayer Before Mass

Open my mouth, O Lord, to bless Your Holy Name.
Cleanse my heart from all evil and distracting thoughts.
Enlighten my understanding and inflame my will
That I may serve worthily at Your Holy Altar.

O Mary, Mother of Christ, obtain for me the most
Important grace of knowing my vocation in life. Grant
Me a true spirit of faith and humble obedience so that I
May ever behold the priest as a representative of God and
Willingly follow him in the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Christ.

Amen.