

CHURCH OF SAINT BENEDICT

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALTAR SERVERS

1. It is a privilege to minister as an altar server at Mass. Servers assist the priest and deacon at the altar and help the congregation pray.
2. A schedule for all ministers, including altar servers, is placed as an insert in the bulletin on the last Sunday of each month with the assignments for the upcoming month.
3. If you are unable to fulfill your assignment, **it will be your responsibility to make arrangements for a substitute.** A complete list of all servers and the Masses they serve will be provided to each altar server.
4. If you will be away for more than two weeks, please call the church office to let them know before the next month's schedule is prepared. The schedule is usually prepared the third week of the month and placed in the Bulletin. Check for your names, circle them and post the schedule as a reminder somewhere such as on the refrigerator.
5. Always dress appropriately and neatly (**no flip-flops**). Be sure that your hair is combed and groomed, your fingernails trimmed and your hands are clean.
6. Please arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of Mass and sign-in on the sign-in sheet in the back of the church.
7. After you have vested, please light the candles and remain near the chapel until time for Mass to begin. The cross bearer should double check that the cross is in the priests' sacristy.
8. Decide with the other servers what each person will be doing such as who will ring the bells.
9. Do not be nervous, remember that the priest and deacons are there to help you serve well and not to reprimand you. They appreciate your help.
10. Say a brief silent prayer such as "Dear Lord, help me to do my best."

11. At all times during the Mass except when carrying the cross or holding one of the vessels or towels, the servers should have their hands folded.
12. In the Entrance Procession, the cross bearer will lead the procession when the priest indicates it is time to begin. The other two servers hold their hands folded. Walk slowly down the aisle to the front of the altar and spread out only enough to allow room for the priest and deacon. The cross bearer should stand on the left side. When the priest and deacon are in place, all turn toward the tabernacle and genuflect, except the cross bearer who bows. (A genuflection is the reverent touching of the **right knee** to the floor.)
13. After genuflecting, while the priest and deacon reverence the altar with a kiss of respect, the cross bearer will place the cross in the stand, making sure that the corpus is facing the congregation. The servers proceed to their places. If there is a deacon at the Mass, please allow him to sit to the right of the priest. The cross bearer should sit to the right of the deacon next to the Roman Missal (big red book with the Mass prayers).
14. When the priest says, "Let us pray", the cross bearer brings the Missal (big red book with Mass prayers) to the priest and holds it open until the conclusion of the Opening Prayer. When the prayer is finished, the server gives the priest a bow of the head and places the Missal back on the small table next to his/her chair. The server then sits down.
15. While the collection is being taken up, the cross bearer brings the Missal to the altar and places it on the left side of the altar. The other two servers bring to the altar the following things: 1) The corporal and purificators, 2) the ciborium 3) the chalices, 4) the wine, and 5) one cruet of water.
16. If a deacon is present, he will normally go to the credence table and carry the wine, and purificators to the altar. The servers hand him the chalices, ciborium, and cruet of water. Carry no more than two items at a time. Make more than one trip if necessary. Do not just set them down on the altar but hand them to the priest or deacon. The servers then return to their chairs.

17. When the priest and deacon go to the center to receive the gifts, the servers take up their positions, one on one side of the priest and deacon, and the other two on the other side. The server on the right will be handed the collection basket, which is to be set down on the floor by the corner of the altar. The other servers carry the gifts reverently to the altar and hand them to the priest or deacon.
18. The cross bearer goes to his/her chair.
19. The other two servers go to the credence table to prepare for the washing of the priest's hands. One server holds the dish and the towel opened over his/her arm; the other server holds the cruet and pours the water. Both servers stand side by side at the altar. When the priest places his hands over the dish, the server pours a small amount of water over them. He will dry his fingers on the towel. When finished, the servers bow to him and then return the cruet, dish, and towel to the credence table. Take care not to lay the towel in the dish so that it becomes soaked with the water.
20. All three servers then go to the top step on the right side for the Eucharistic Prayer. They remain standing until the "Holy, Holy, Holy" and then kneel together, shoulder to shoulder.
21. One server rings the bells at the Consecration. The bells are rung three times when the priest raises the Host and three times when he raises the Chalice.
22. At the Sign of Peace, the servers exchange a sign of peace with one another. **Servers should not leave the sanctuary during the Sign of Peace.**
23. After receiving Holy Communion, the servers return to their chairs to make their thanksgiving. If for any reason, a server does not wish to receive Holy Communion, he/she simply crosses his/her arms over the heart, and the priest will give a blessing instead.
24. While Holy Communion is being distributed, the cross bearer retrieves the Missal from the altar, closes it, and places it on the small table next to his/her chair.

25. After Holy Communion, when the Blessed Sacrament has been returned to the Tabernacle, the priest will stand and say, "Let us pray." The cross bearer will again bring the Missal to the priest and hold it open for the Prayer after Holy Communion. When the prayer is concluded, the server bows, returns to his/her chair, and places the Missal back on the small table.
26. During the singing of the closing song, when the priest and deacon leave their chairs to reverence the altar, the servers take up their positions in front of the altar with the cross bearer carrying the cross, leaving enough room in the center for the priest and deacon. When the priest genuflects toward the Tabernacle, the servers genuflect with him. Again, the cross bearer does not genuflect, but bows.
27. The cross bearer slowly leads the procession out. The other two servers walk side by side behind the cross bearer.
28. When the procession reaches the back of the Church, the servers wait for a blessing by the priest.
29. The cross bearer returns the cross to the stand in the sacristy.
30. The other two servers extinguish the candles on the altar.
31. All three servers then hang their albs neatly in the vesting closet. Be sure that the albs are hung correctly on the hanger and that they do not fall off.
32. Finally, it is suggested that you make a brief visit to the Blessed Sacrament and pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary and one Glory Be.