

# Altar Serving Training Manual



## ST. ROSE OF LIMA CHURCH SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

- o Brief description of positions for a Sunday Mass
- o Brief description of Incense, Processions, Funeral Mass, and Bells

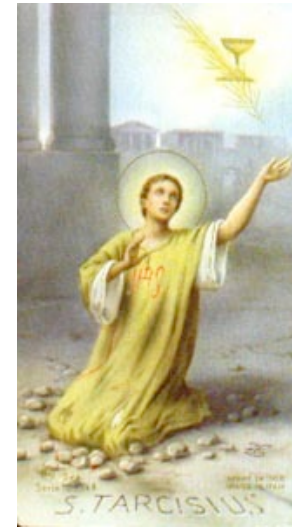
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**GENERAL RULES**

1. Arrive at the sacristy 15 minutes before Mass starts.
2. Sign in.
3. Put on your vestments.
4. Check the credence table for; the priests' chalice with a pall and a purificator, the extra ciboria, the extra cups with purificators, the water cruet, a towel, pitcher and bowl for washing of the hands and the folded corporal.
5. Five minutes before Mass starts. light the candles (altar and processional) and make sure the lights are on.
6. Place the gifts on the gifts table on Sunday. During weekday Mass, the servers will place the gifts on the credence table.
7. Check with the priest/sacristan for any special instructions for that particular Mass.
8. If all 4 servers are not present by five (5) minutes before Mass starts, tell the sacristan the number of servers still needed so that he/she can make an announcement asking for volunteers from the assembly.
9. When you are not carrying any items, your hands should be folded next to your chest. If you are sitting down, your hands should be flat in your lap. If you are carrying an item in one hand, while your other hand is free, it should be placed flat on your chest.
10. When you are processing into the church or leaving the church at the end of Mass, make sure you leave five (5) pews between you and the person in front of you.
11. When you pass in front of the altar, you should always stop and bow your head. When you process into the church or out of the church, if you are carrying an item, you only bow your head when you reach the altar. If you are not carrying any item you should genuflect.
12. When the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist enter the sanctuary, Altar Servers will stand at their chairs until the ministers have moved forward and then stand behind them awaiting communion.
13. Make sure the presider has checked the sacramentary before you place it on the credence table.
14. The servers at all times should join the assembly in the singing and the responses to the prayers.

## An Altar Server's Prayer



O God, You have graciously called me to  
serve You upon Your altar.

Grant me the graces that I need to serve  
You faithfully and wholeheartedly.

Grant too that while serving You, may I  
follow the example of St. Tarcisus, who  
died protecting the Eucharist, and walk the  
same path that led him to Heaven.

St. Tarcisus, pray for me and for all  
servers.

## **THE CROSS BEARER**

1. After the Prayer of the Faithful, when the priest sits down, the Cross Bearer will take the corporal from the credence table and place it on the altar in the proper fashion.
2. He/She will then go back and get the chalice and place it on the altar, to the right of the center corporal while the Book Bearer brings the book and places it to the left of the center corporal.
3. The Cross Bearer will go with the presider to receive the gifts.
4. If the Cross Bearer receives the bread, he/she gives it to the priest first.
5. If the Cross Bearer receives the flagon of wine, he/she waits until the priest is ready and then hands to priest.
6. The Cross Bearer will immediately take the water cruet to the priest or deacon. He/She will remain next to the altar until the priest/deacon returns it. Then he/she will bow and return it to the credence table.
7. The Cross Bearer will carry the water pitcher and the bowl for the washing of the hands.
8. The Cross Bearer will help remove items from the altar during communion.
9. Remove corporal from altar after tabernacle is closed.

## **THE CANDLE BEARERS**

1. The Candle Bearers will carry the processional candles when entering and leaving the church, procession of the gospel and procession of the gifts.
  2. They ring the bells at appropriate times.
  3. They place the trays with the ciboria and cups on the altar at the Lamb of God.
  4. They receive the empty large ciborium and wine flagon from the priest after the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ.
  5. They remove the empty trays from the altar during communion.
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## **THE BOOK BEARER**

1. After the entrance procession, the Book Bearer sitting on the chair closest to the credence table, will bring the sacramentary to the priest when he says "Let us pray."
  2. After the people respond "Amen", the server will go back to his/her seat and keep the sacramentary close to him/her at the credence table.
  3. After the Prayer of the Faithful, the Book Bearer will place the sacramentary on the altar to the left of the center corporal while the cross bearer is placing the chalice.
  4. The Book Bearer will go with the priest to receive the gifts.
  5. If the Book Bearer receives the bread he/she will hand it to the priest first.
  6. If the Book Bearer receives the flagon of wine, he/she waits and hands it to the priest when he is ready for it.
  7. The Book Bearer will then carry the towel for the priest to use during the washing of hands. After the presider washes his hands, the cross and the Book Bearer will bow as the priest bows.
  8. The Book Bearer will remove the book from the altar during communion.
  9. When the priest says "Let us Pray", the server will take the book to him.
  10. When the people say "Amen", the Book Bearer will return to his/her chair.
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## PROCESSIONS

### Entrance Procession

1. The thurifer (the server who carries the incense) leads the procession when incense is used.
2. Then the cross bearer (follows the thurifer when incense is used).
3. The candle bearers stand on each side of the cross bearer.
4. The book bearer (without the book) follows the cross and candles.
5. Leave five (5) pews between you and the server in front of you.
6. Walk slowly in a dignified manner.
7. Carry the cross high as possible. The candle bearers should carry the candles straight and at eye level.
8. The servers who are carrying items will stop in front of the altar and bow their heads. The cross and candles are placed in the sacristy by the servers.
9. The book bearer will genuflect with priest and go to his/her seat.

### Gospel Procession

1. Just before 2<sup>nd</sup> reading starts candle bearers will get processional candles.
2. When 2<sup>nd</sup> reading finishes come out of sacristy side by side. Go to front of altar, stop and turn to face altar.
3. Priest will stand, go to altar, pick up gospel and turn west walking around altar. **Before** priest reaches you turn toward ambo, walking side by side.
4. Servers slowly walk toward ambo with priest behind.
5. When reaching ambo, one candle bearer stops on west side of ambo, the other continues to walk to east side. Both stand facing the ambo.
6. When gospel is completed, candle bearers return to sacristy waking side to side. Stop at altar and bow then continue to sacristy walking side by side.

### Procession of Gifts

1. Just before the end of the Prayers of the Faithful go retrieve the procession candles, wait till the end of Prayers of the Faithful.
2. While the altar is prepared the two (2) candle bearers with lit candles will proceed from the sacristy, side by side, to the front of the altar.
3. Facing the altar, bow your heads together and turn inward and walk down to gift table. Stop at row before table, turn inward and wait.
4. The servers will wait until the ushers have prepared the people with the gifts before they begin to walk toward the sanctuary. The people with gifts should be behind the servers.
5. When they reach the priest at the first step they will split and walk around the priest and other servers and toward altar. Bow and return to sacristy, walking side by side.

### Procession out of the Church

1. As the priest goes to reverence the altar, the servers should line up in their proper places.
2. The book bearer next to priest on right side facing the altar, then candle bearers and cross bearer side by side, cross bearer in the middle. Incense, if used, behind cross.
3. When the priest turns around, servers will turn around together and begin to process out down the center aisle. Candle bearers turn inward toward cross.
4. When processing out keep five (5) pews behind the person in front of you.

### After Mass

1. Servers will return to the sacristy to put away cross and candles.
2. One (1) server will extinguish sanctuary candles using extinguisher/snuffer.
3. All servers will hang up their vestments on the hangers in their proper size section and cords in the appropriate bin.

## INCENSE – GENERAL MASS

### Entrance Procession

1. Light charcoal five (5) minutes before Mass.
2. Bring thurible and boat when priest indicates he is ready.
3. Priest places incense while in vestibule before entering church for procession.
4. Thurifer is in front of the procession.
5. Thurifer reaches front of altar, bows head in front of tabernacle and turns left and stands at bottom of step by deacon chair facing the altar.
6. When priest reaches altar, bring thurifer to him and go back to same place by deacon chair.
7. After priest finishes incensing the altar retrieve the thurible and boat, return both to the sacristy.

### Gospel Procession

1. Just before 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, get thurible and boat in sacristy. Candle bearers will get processional candles.
2. When 2<sup>nd</sup> reading finishes come out of sacristy, first thurifer and then candles, side by side. Go to front of altar, turn to face altar, thurifer stops in middle and candle on left stops on thurifers left, candle on the right stops on thurifers right. All face the altar.
3. Priest will stand, go to altar, pick up gospel and turn west walking around altar. **Before** priest reaches you turn toward ambo, thurifer first then candles side by side.
4. Servers slowly walk toward ambo with priest behind.
5. When reaching ambo, incense bearer stands in back of ambo, one candle bearer stops on west side of ambo, the other continues to walk to east side. Both stand facing the ambo.
6. Priest will incense the book and ambo and give back to thurifer. **When gospel is completed**, thurifer followed by candle bearers, side by side, return to sacristy. Stop at altar, thurifer in middle, candle on each side and bow. Return to sacristy with thurifer first and candles side by side.
7. Thurifer will light one (1) charcoal.

## Incense over Gifts (Liturgy of the Eucharist)

1. When the priest goes to receive the gifts being brought up to the altar, go to the sacristy to retrieve the thurible and boat. Stand next to the deacon chair below step.
2. After the priest sets up the altar he will ask you to move forward to him. The Priest will add incense to the thurible. Hand thurible to priest and return boat to credence table.
3. If deacon is not present go to next step. If present the deacon does step 4 and 5. You take the thurible when he is done.
4. After priest is done incensing the gifts and altar, move forward to the priest, take thurible from him and incense priest by holding chain close to thurible with dominate hand and swing thurible carefully 2X2 times.
5. Walk to top step in front of altar, motion to the congregation to stand, and incense congregation 1X1 times. First to west side, then center, and last east side. Return thurible and boat to sacristy and return to seat.

## FUNERAL MASS

1. Entrance procession starts at the front door of the vestibule. Bring cross, holy water and book to vestibule. **Slow** procession with cross in front and other servers side by side. Return items to sacristy.
2. Liturgy of the Word – same as Sunday Mass
3. Liturgy of the Eucharist – same as Sunday Mass except at the Our Father light one (1) charcoal.
4. Rite of Commendation – after last prayer of Liturgy of the Eucharist retrieve cross, holy water and thurible. Priest will sprinkle with holy water and incense the deceased. Priest stands at head of casket, cross stands at foot of casket, thurifer at priests right, holy water at priest's left.
5. Exit procession – **slow** procession back with thurifer first, then cross, then holy water. When reaching vestibule wait in back side by side until priest dismisses you.

## THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

Bells are rung at **three (3) different times** during The Liturgy of the Eucharist.

1. Toward the end of the "Holy, Holy" pick up bells. The priest hands are raised while he is standing behind the altar with the ciborium containing the host and chalice containing the wine on the altar. Be ready to ring the bells. Priest then brings his hands over the ciborium and chalice. (Verbal cue can change). During the hand cue quickly ring the bells **once** by holding the handle of the bell and give a quick, hard turn one time. Let the bells ring and hold bells still until next cue.
  2. Rising of the host above the priests' head. Verbal cue is "This is my body which is given up for you." Prepare to ring at the end of the verbal cue. At the end of cue, while the host is being raised, ring the bell **three (3)** times by quickly turning the bell three (3) distinct times. Let the bells ring and hold bells still until next cue.
  3. Rising of the chalice above the priests' head. Verbal cue is "Do this in memory of me". Prepare to ring at the end of the verbal cue. At the end of the cue, when the chalice is being raised, ring the bell **three (3)** times by quickly turning the bell three (3) distinct times. Place the bells down quietly close to deacon chair.
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