Guidance for Altar Servers at Immaculate Conception Church

The job of the altar server is an important one. The best altar servers are those who pay attention to what is going on, who are always on their best behavior, and who say the prayers they know with everyone else.

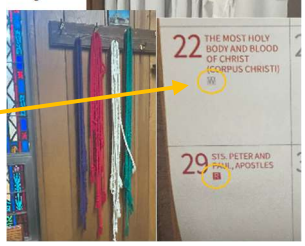
Here's some of the things that altar servers do:

1. **Get ready early.**

2. **Dress for your role.**
   - Take a white robe (called an "alb") that fits you, from the center closet in the vestibule.
     - The vestibule is the hallway between the church and the sacristy.
   - Put the white robe on over your clothes.
   - Find the rope (called a "cincture") in the sacristy. You can ask someone which is the right color for the day. Altar servers can get an idea of the right color from the calendar on the wall.
   - Tie the rope around your waist, like a belt, so that it hangs from your right hip. The other altar server, the Deacon, or the Priest can show you how.









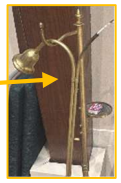
3. **Light the first two candles.**
   - About five minutes before Mass starts, light the two candles in front of the stand (called the "ambo") that the priest or deacon reads the Gospel from. Optional: If you prefer, also light the two candles at the altar before Mass, instead of later.

4. **Walk in with the priest.**
   - Walk to the sanctuary with the priest and other altar server as the music begins at the start of Mass. The altar servers go first. The others, including the priest, follow you.
     - The sanctuary is that raised area that includes the altar, ambo, and tabernacle. The altar is the table, but some people refer to the entire sanctuary as the altar.
   - In front of the altar, move to the side to make room for the others, and pause.
   - You and the other altar server should bow then the priest bows or kneels, in front of the altar.
   - Join everyone in going to their seats in the sanctuary. The altar servers sit on opposite sides of the priest in one of the shorter seats.

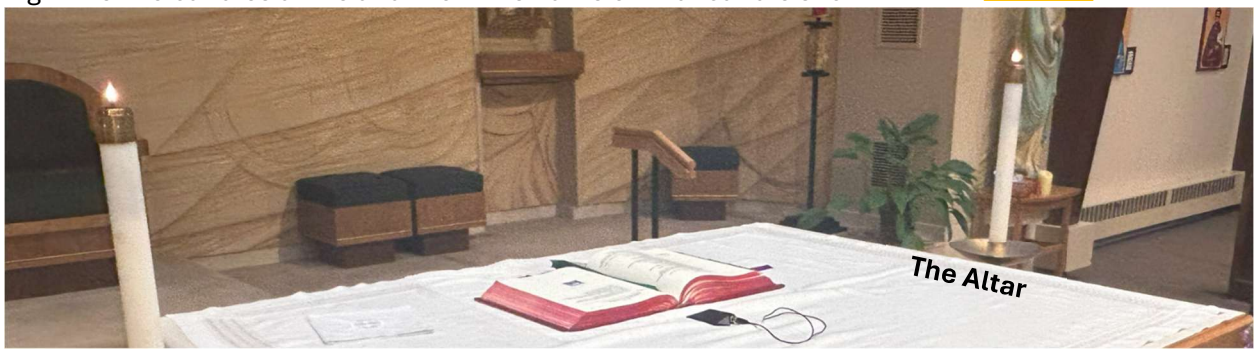


5. **Hold the prayer book.**
   - When the priest says, "Let us pray", pick up the red book (called the "missal") and hold it up to the priest. He will find the right page. He'll let you know when the book can be closed and taken back to your seat.

6. **Help the priest bring the gifts to the altar.**
   - After the Prayers of the Faithful ("Lord, hear our prayer." … "Amen."), go with the priest in front of the altar.
     - Place any gifts handed to you (the paten or wine cruet) on the altar.



7. **If not yet lit, light the other two candles (at the altar).**
   - Light the candle stick from a candle at the ambo.
   - Light the two candles at the altar from the flame on that candle stick.



   - Put out the flame on the candle stick by pulling the wick into the stick using the lever. Then push it out right away so the hot wax on the wick doesn't get stuck as it cools.
   - Make sure both candles at the ambo are out.

8. **Help with the wine and water.**
   - Bring the cruet" of water from the side table near the choir (called the "credence table") to the side of the altar, near the priest.
   - First wine is poured by the priest, who may give it you when he is done.
   - The give the water cruet to the priest, who will return it to you after he pours the water into the wine.
   - Return the unused wine and water to the side table near the choir.


Wine & water cruets

9. **Bring the pitcher of water, the bowl, and the towel to the priest.**
   - Get the pitcher of water, the bowl, and the towel from the side table near the choir, to the priest.
   - When he's ready, pour some water from the pitcher, over the priest's fingers, catching any dripping water under his hands with the bowl.
   - Let the priest take the towel to dry his hands. He will give it right back to you when he is done.
   - Return the water, bowl, and towel to the side table near the choir.



10. Ring the bell.

- Place the mat on the lower step in preparation for kneeling near the bell.
- Ring the bell gently at three separate times:
    - After the "Holy, Holy, Holy", when the priest holds his hands over the bread and wine.
    - When the priest raises the Holy Communion host
    - When the priest raises the cup of wine



11. Walk out at the end.

- In front of the altar, you and the other altar server should bow then the priest bows or kneels.
- Walk to the back of the church.
- Continue walking without the priest toward the place where you came in.

12. Clean up.

- Take the items from the credence table (near the choir) back into the sacristy.
    - Wine cruet
    - Water cruet
    - Water pitcher
    - Bowl
    - Towel
    - Chalices (cups)
    - Plates (called "patens")
- Put your rope and robe back where they belong.

This is just a guide. Some things may change over time.