



SERVING AT MASS AT SVdP



The following are the Servers' actions before, during and after Mass. If it is a Fr. Andrew Mass, extra functions are included in **red** to identify movements of his chair & assistance with stairs. The *purpose* of altar service is to serve God *invisibly* so as to beautify the Mass for the people. When in doubt, look to Deacon for guidance; watching his hands for tips on what to do next. Movement is visible, so the less - the better! Thus, try only to move when someone else is also moving, and never move twice when once will do. Don't sway or fidget! Here's what we mean:

1. BEFORE MASS:

- a. **Arrive EARLY!!!** Get to Church at least 15 minutes before Mass.
- b. Go to Vesting Sacristy, **Sign In**, & Vest in red cassock, white surplice, and cross (color side out).
- c. Check the time. If it's 10 minutes or less to the start of Mass, **light all 6 candles.**
- d. Return to the Sacristy for the group Prayer led by Father or Deacon.
- e. Decide amongst the servers present who will perform which function.
- f. If you are carrying the cross or a candle, after group prayer, go get it from its stand.
- g. Go back through the sacristy and around to the side aisle to the back of the Church.

2. MASS STARTS: Phase 1: Procession:

- a. The lector will read the introduction; then the music starts.
- b. The Cross Bearer starts walking **when the lyrics start to be sung.**
- c. Cross bearer always goes first.
- d. Candles allow the Cross Bearer to get **THREE pews** ahead and then follow, side-by-side, maintaining the 3-pew separation to the altar & directly back to the stands; without bowing.
- e. **At the altar, one server (previously chosen by Fr.) remains on the carpet to assist Fr. Andrew up the steps.** Server waits just left of the middle of the center aisle. Fr. Andrew will use your right shoulder to balance himself so his knees don't buckle.
- f. If not assisting Fr. Andrew, do NOT bow to the altar (because you are carrying something), but go straight to the stands and replace your cross or candle. (**IF** you're the candle bearer on the right, go around the altar on the right);
- g. **If** you are **NOT** carrying anything, then wait for Father at the base of the steps and perform a "profound bow" (bow at the waist keeping neck straight to look down at the floor; this is not a karate match where we don't trust our opponent: we TRUST Jesus!) with Fr. before going up the stairs.
- h. Go to your seat and remain standing (through the Collect Prayer).
- i. Near the end of the *Gloria*, the Deacon will step toward his chair as a signal for the Book Bearer immediately to come forward with the book for Father to read the Collect Prayer.
- j. When Father says, "Let us pray" the Book Bearer should already be standing in front of the small table (between Father and the second Deacon's chair) so that Father can face the congregation while praying.
- k. Return the book - gently - to the corner credence table and sit down.
- l. All other servers also sit after the Collect Prayer (when Book Bearer sits; i.e., sit together).

3. PHASE 2: Gospel Procession:

- a. After the second reading . . . when Deacon stands, the Candle Bearers stand.
- b. When Deacon walks out and over in front of Father, the Candle Bearers walk over to the candle stands and remove the candles from the stands and wait.

- c. When Deacon walks over to the altar, the Candle Bearers walk over to the end of the altar near Father **and wait**.
 - d. After Deacon picks up the Book of the Gospels, turns and takes **TWO (2) STEPS**, Candle Bearers begin walking slowly to the Ambo.
 - e. The first Candle Bearer goes to the far side of the Ambo, the second to the near side.
 - f. Deacon proclaims the Gospel. When Deacon bends over to kiss the page, Candle Bearers immediately turn and walk over to return their candles to the stands.
4. **PHASE 3: HOMILY:**
- a. **IF Fr. Andrew is preaching, one server (usually the Cross Bearer) moves Fr. Andrew's chair from the wall to in front of the altar in the center.**
 - i. **IF Fr. Andrew is not preaching, go sit down.**
 - b. **After Fr's homily, move the chair to the back side of the altar for the Consecration.**
5. **PHASE 4: COMMUNION:**
- a. Bring items from the credence table to Deacon to set the altar for Communion. *(Never set items on, or remove them from, the altar. Give them to Deacon. After Communion, let Deacon, or Father, hand them to you.)*
 - b. After Deacon sets the altar, he will bow to the altar. When Deacon bows, go with Father and Deacon in front of the altar to receive the gifts.
 - c. IF you are a Candle Bearer, instead of setting the altar, you will retrieve your candles and, like before Mass, go through the Sacristy, down the side aisle to the back of the Church and lead the family bringing the gifts forward. Go to your side of Father & Deacon, turn in & wait.
 - d. After Father and Deacon receive the gifts, return the candles to their stands.
 - e. Line up along the base of the stairs behind the altar.
 - f. When the **Holy, Holy, Holy** begins to be sung, go to the kneelers at the altar and stand there.
 - g. Kneel, and stand, at the usual times - when the congregation does.
 - h. **BELL RINGER:**
 - i. When Deacon kneels, and Father extends his hands over the gifts, ring bell for five seconds. **Let it stop ringing completely on its own and never set it down while it's still ringing.** *(It's best not to set it down at all until after the last ring. Leave it hanging at your side until finished. Thus, you pick up & set down only once.)*
 - ii. Ring for another five seconds at the elevation of the Host.
 - iii. Ring for another five seconds at the elevation of the Chalice. Then set it down.
 - i. When everyone stands, return to the base of the stairs behind the altar for the *Our Father*, the Rite of Peace, and to receive Communion.
 - j. After Father, Deacon and the Eucharistic Ministers leave the altar, return to the kneelers for the duration of Communion.
6. **PHASE 5: AFTER COMMUNION:**
- a. When the E.M.s return to the altar, **bring the water to the altar** and give to Deacon.
 - b. Form a line one full step onto the rug to remove items from the altar back to the Credence Table. *(Don't be shy. When you see that an item is ready to be removed, move over to Deacon to receive it. This helps move things along.)*

- c. After the last item has been removed from the altar, return to your seat and sit down.
 - d. **When Fr. Andrew leaves the altar, return his chair to the far wall, then sit down.**
 - e. **BOOK BEARER:**
 - i. After a short time of silence while seated, pick up the book and open it to the page marked by the day's ribbon.
 - ii. When Deacon looks your way and nods his head, that's your sign to go to the small table next to Father.
 - iii. Walk back in front of the small table. Father will once again stand up and say, "*Let us pray . . .*" When he does, you should already be in front of the small table.
 - iv. When Father says, "*. . . in the unity of the Holy Spirit*" close the book and return it to the corner Credence Table.
 - f. Brief announcements;
 - g. The priest's blessing;
 - h. The deacon's dismissal of the people;
 - i. The Priests and Deacons reverence the altar with a kiss while cross bearer and candle bearers retrieve their cross and candles from the stands;
 - i. **IF you assisted Fr. Andrew @ the stairs coming in, do so also going out.**
 - j. Walk down the stairs, and line up to Process Out.
 - i. Cross bearer goes first to the third pew and turns around facing the altar.
 - ii. Candle bearers go next to just before the first pew and turn around facing the altar.
 - iii. Priests and Deacons stop at the bottom of the steps and face the altar.
 - k. A profound bow, or genuflection, to the altar by Father, Deacon and accompanying ministers and servers (who are NOT carrying anything).
 - l. When Priests and Deacons turn, **all turn** and process out **slowly keeping the three pew distance of separation.**
7. **AFTER MASS:**
- a. Return cross & candles to their stands, de-vest and assist in clearing items from the Credence Tables. Help clean vessels and make sure server's closet is neat and orderly.
 - b. Wasn't that *fun and easy?!?! Remember to SMILE! :-)* and **sing along!** **Mass is a joyous occasion!** We receive the incredible gift of the Eucharist!
 - c. The people, especially others discerning whether to become a server, will be watching you, so put your best you out there for them to see, and let them see how happy you are to be serving God!
 - d. If we all get this altar service right, then the people will experience a wonderful Communion without really even realizing *why*, but we'll know it's because we were virtually invisible in performing our service to God.