
SERVERS: (Acolytes, Altar Servers, Cross Bearers, Candle Bearers)

Servers responsibilities include carrying the thurible, cross, candles in procession, assisting at the chair (especially with the Missal) and assisting at the altar by bringing the bread, wine and water to the celebrant (cf: *GIRM* no. 100). Efficient and discreet serving contributes to the orderliness and flow of the celebration. In fulfilling their ministry, servers model Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served. (cf: Mt. 20:28)

Servers should carry out their work in a quiet and dignified manner. They should not move about during the prayers, readings, or times of reflection except where their ministry absolutely requires otherwise. They model the postures and the principles of participation for the rest of the assembly.

DO'S: (Practices may vary in each parish dependent on custom, tradition, etc.)

- Each server should be trained to know their responsibilities and to do all the tasks of altar serving.
- Training sessions should be held to learn about altar, credence table, sacred vessels for Mass, the corporal & purificator and their purposes.
- Arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before the start of Mass.
- In addition to dressing appropriately and modestly:
 - Adults: alb, cincture.
 - Youth: alb or cassock/surplus, cincture.
- Consult with the celebrant about any specific instructions before each Mass.
- Following the Cross in the Entrance Procession, either bow or genuflect when you reach the front of the altar
- During the celebration of the Mass:
 - Sit up straight, hands on their lap, remain quiet/still so as to not draw attention to themselves or cause distraction.
 - Remain attentive to the needs of the minister/celebrant during the celebration.
- When standing, hands should either be held together at chest height in a praying position.
- Servers sit, stand and kneel at designated parts of the Mass.
- All processions are slightly slower than normal walking speed.
- The Cross bearer carries the cross in the entrance and recessional procession and places it in its proper place. The Cross bearer does not bow at the altar.
- A server may be responsible for holding the Roman Missal for the Opening Prayer, Prayer before the General Intercessions, the Prayer after Holy Communion and special blessings.
- At the Offertory, the servers place the following on the altar:
 - the Roman Missal (slightly to the left side)
 - the corporal (in the centre)
 - the chalice (to the right side of the corporal)
 - all other vessels (to the right side of the chalice)
- The servers then join the celebrant at the front of the altar to receive the gifts

- The servers bring the wine & water cruets to the altar for the celebrant and then return them to the credence table.
 - Hand the cruets to the minister/celebrant with the handles facing them.
- The servers bring the items for the washing of the hands to the side of the altar.
 - If one server, then the towel is placed over the left arm while handling the water cruet and bowl.
- Bow after receiving the vessels from the minister/celebrant.
- If bells are used, one server should be designated to ring the bells at the appropriate times:
 - When the celebrant extends his hands over the gifts.
 - At the elevation of the host – the Body of Christ.
 - At the elevation of the wine – the Precious Blood.
 - When the celebrant receives from the chalice.
- If the celebrant purifies the vessels after Holy Communion, one server brings the water cruet to the altar and either pours the water for the celebrant or gives the cruet to the celebrant.
- The servers remove the vessels, cloths and Roman Missal from the altar after the celebrant has finished purifying the sacred vessels.
- After the final blessing, gather with the celebrant and other ministers in front of the altar, bow or genuflect, then proceed slowly down the aisle following the Cross bearer.

DON'TS:

- Don't be late or miss your scheduled time to serve.
- Don't forget to leave enough time to change into your alb, etc.
- Don't forget to pray when it's quiet and you're not engaged in any activity
- Don't rush.
- Don't fidget while in the sanctuary.

Extract taken from:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson



Nelson Diocese Liturgy Committee