

The Jubilee for Altar Servers during the Millennium Year

(Address at the General Audience, August 1, 2001, the 1,000th of Pope John Paul II's pontificate)

Dear Brothers and Sisters! Dear Young People!

Today St. Peter's Square is the square of youth. About a year ago, at the heart of the Great Jubilee 2000, youths from all over the world found solicitous welcome here for the celebration of World Youth Day. Today this Square, which hosts the 1,000th general audience since divine Providence called me to be a Successor to the Apostle Peter, receives the thousands of boys and girls, who have come from all over Europe on pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles.

Dear altar servers! Yesterday you crossed St. Peter's Square in a long procession to be near the basilica's altar of Confession. By so doing, you prolonged in some way the path that the youth of the world began in the Holy Year. The motto of your pilgrimage to the Eternal City, "Toward a New World," is a sign of your willingness to take your Christian vocation seriously.

I greet you affectionately, dear young people, and I am happy that this meeting has taken place. In particular, I thank Auxiliary Bishop Martin Gächter, president of Coetus Internationalis Ministrantium, who has spoken such cordial words to me on your behalf. With special joy I address the altar servers of German-speaking countries, who numerically constitute the largest group. It is beautiful that so many young Christians have come from Germany! Your commitment to the altar is not only a duty, but a great honor, a genuine holy service. In connection with this service, I wish to propose some reflections to you.

The altar server's clothing is very special. It recalls the garment that each one puts on when he is welcomed in Jesus Christ in the community. I am referring to the baptismal gown, whose profound meaning Saint Paul clarifies: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Even if you, dear altar servers, can no longer fit into your baptismal gown, you have put on the clothing of altar servers. Yes, baptism is the point of departure of your "authentic liturgical service," which places you next to your bishops, priests and deacons (see [Sacrosanctum Concilium](#), No. 29).

The altar server occupies a privileged place in the liturgical celebration. He who serves at Mass, presents himself to a community. He experiences firsthand that Jesus Christ is present and active in every liturgical act. Jesus is present when the community comes together to pray and render praise to God. Jesus is present in the Word of sacred Scripture. Jesus is present above all in the Eucharist under the signs of bread and wine. He acts through the priest who, in the person of Christ, celebrates the holy Mass and administers the sacraments. Therefore, in the liturgy, you are much more than simple "helpers of the parish priest." Above all, you are servers of Jesus Christ, of the eternal High Priest. Thus, you, altar servers, are called in particular to be young friends of Jesus. Be determined to go deeper and to cultivate this friendship with him. You will discover that in Jesus you have found a true friend for life.

The altar server often has a candlestick in his hand. How can one not think of that which Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Your service cannot be limited to the inside of a church. It must shine in everyday life: in school, in the family, and in different realms of society. Because, whoever wishes to serve Jesus Christ inside a church must be his witness everywhere.

Dear young people! Your contemporaries wait for the real "light of the world" (see John 1:9). Do not hold your candlestick only inside a church, but carry the light of the Gospel to all those who are in darkness and are living through a difficult time in their life.

I have spoken of friendship with Jesus. How happy I would be if something more sprang from this friendship! How beautiful it would be if some of you were to discover a vocation to the priesthood! Jesus Christ has urgent need of youths who will be at his disposition with generosity and no reservations. Moreover, might not the Lord also call one or two of you girls to embrace the consecrated life to serve the Church and the brothers and sisters? Even for those who wish to be united in marriage, the service of altar servers teaches that a real union must always include readiness for reciprocal and free service.



St Agatha's Altar Servers Booklet

2018

The Order of the Mass

Introductory Rites

Procession

The servers process in this order: the *cross bearer*, *candle-bearers*, *other servers*, *lector* and *priest*.

When you get to the Altar, wait in procession, bow together with the priest and wait for him to reverence the Altar. Then move to your seat and remain standing. If you are carrying something bow instead of genuflecting.

Greeting

Penitential Rite

Kyrie

Gloria

Book-bearer is to hold book for priest.

Opening Prayer

(Sit after opening prayer)

NOTES

“At the altar, your service is directed firstly to God, secondly as help to the clergy, and thirdly as assistance to the people who have gathered for worship. Your actions are seen. You appear in public, but you are never a performer. By your faithful duty, you remain always a servant of Jesus Christ in the community of His Church.

A good server is not only skilled at his ‘craft’ – duty at the altar. He is a humble and sincere person. He knows that he is a member of a team, working together in harmony, for the glory of God. He learns that his work at the altar is a kind of prayer in action. He is careful and reverent, even if he has only some small duty to perform.”

The Server is an active and full participant in the celebrations, modelling the activity of the assembly by singing, praying and keeping silence.

The server is committed to giving time and talent to the parish community, demonstrating willingness to serve God’s people in this ministry.

Servers assist in the preparation of the altar, and clearing the altar after the Mass as well as assisting the priest during the Mass.

It is important that altar servers know where various items used in the Mass are kept in the sacristy – If you’re not sure ask.

The Server is expected to arrive 10-15 minutes before Mass is due to commence.

Concluding Rite

Greeting and blessing

Dismissal & Recessional

After the dismissal, *cross bearer* and *candle bearers* move to collect the cross and candles and join the priest and remaining servers at the front of the Sanctuary standing in procession order turning to face the Altar. Wait for priest, bow with priest and process out in the same order they processed in. (Cross bearer, candles, servers, priest)

Setup of the Altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist

To prepare the Altar you will need a book stand, the Sacramentary, Chalice with the Pall, Purifier and Corporal, Ciborium, Pattern (if not used in offertory) and candles (if not already on Altar). Set up of these Altar vessels will depend on the priest celebrating Mass.

If the server is to unfold the Corporal, it shall be done in this order.

1. Place the folded Corporal on the Altar with cross facing down on the Altar cloth.
2. Unfold the Corporal to one side then the other side
3. Unfold the Corporal to the top and then the bottom.
4. Straighten the Corporal where needed.

Nb. The Corporal (comes from the Latin word Corpus - meaning body) is used to catch any crumbs that fall from the body of Christ. It is then refolded at the end of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in a way that it wraps up and keeps safe any consecrated crumbs that may have fallen from the body of Christ. Great care should be taken when folding and unfolding the Corporal, especially if it hasn't been washed since last used.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Everyone stands to welcome the Gospel as a sign of respect.
At this time, candle bearers collect the candles and move to either side of the lectern. Servers should turn to face the Lectern while the Gospel is being read if not doing so already.
Nb. This is also done to honour the Gospel.

Gospel

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the candle bearers return candles to the credence table and blow them out.

Homily

Everyone sits.

Profession of Faith

All stand. Recite the Profession of Faith.

Prayers of the Faithful

The *book bearer holds book for priest* until the end of the prayers of the faithful.

Those leading the *offertory procession* and *preparing the Altar* for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

To prepare the Altar you will need; *book stand, the Sacramentary, Chalice with the Pall, Purifier and Corporal*, Communion bowls, Patten (if not used in offertory)

Set up of these Altar vessels will depend on the priest celebrating Mass.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts/Offertory

Two servers proceed to the offertory table directly after the General intercessions and wait to lead the offertory procession to the Altar.

Start to move towards the altar when you see the priest begin to move to where he will receive the gifts.

The people in this procession represent us all bringing our gifts to the altar as an act of participation

Blessing of the gifts

When the gifts are brought forward, **two servers need to be with the priest to assist him** in receiving the gifts. Bowing to those offering the gift. These servers will then proceed to take the bread and wine to the Altar, present the **Patten to the Priest and get ready to present the wine and water.**

When the cruets containing the wine and water have been handed back to you, give a **slight bow together** and proceed to the credence table where you will **collect the finger bowl and finger towel**. Proceed back to the Altar and present the bowl and towel when priest is ready. After he has washed and dried his hands, give a *slight bow and return the bowl and towel to the credence table.*

Prayer over the Gifts

When the priest invites us to pray, all servers move to the designated spot on the Sanctuary to kneel during the consecration. In our parish this will be at the servers' seats. Servers stand facing the Altar until the Holy, holy has been sung.

Preface

The Holy, Holy

(All kneel)

Eucharistic Prayer

The Consecration

When the priest holds his hands over the gifts, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, a server will ring the bells slightly.

The bells are rung again **(1) at the elevation of the Body of Christ** and **(2) the elevation of Blood of Christ.**

Memorial Acclamation

The Great Amen

After the Great Amen has been sung. **(All stand).**

Communion Rite

Our Father

Sign of Peace

Servers move to give the sign of peace to the priest first then to each other. At this point, bring the empty vessels on the credence table that are needed for communion to the Altar.

Lamb of God

After the Lamb of God (All kneel)

Communion

After the priest has received the Body and Blood of Christ, stand and move to receive Holy Communion. After receiving, servers will bless themselves, bow together and move back to their seats where they will kneel till the Tabernacle has been closed. At this point servers, start taking vessels back to the credence table. Another server can assist with this job while the rest of the servers can sit. If candles are used for the recessional, they can be relit at this time.

Prayer after Communion

Book bearer is to hold book for priest.