

# The Altar Server

## I N S T R U C T I O N S



### **PROCEDURES STARTING THE 2011-2012 LITURGICAL YEAR.**

St. Pius X Parish was introduced to Fr. Luis Moreno in the summer of 2011. It is important to note that with this change in staff, there have been a number of changes to the duties of the Mass Ministries including Altar Servers. Although many duties have remained the same, it is important to review all steps in this instruction guide to insure the new steps have been added and that previous steps are done properly.

## **BEFORE COMING TO CHURCH**

Consider that at certain times during the Mass, the congregation will be watching the Altar Servers instead of watching the Priest. With this in mind...

- Ensure you are awake and properly attired before church. A quick look in the mirror before you leave home will show if you have forgotten anything (like combing or brushing your hair).
- As there has been a new step added before the start of Mass, it is important that you plan and arrive at church 15 minutes before Mass begins.

## **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- Try to set a good example (*for the entire congregation*).  
Remain respectful and attentive at all times during Mass.
- If you catch yourself starting to fidget with your hands or don't know what to do with them, put them together in prayer.
- Work together as a team.
- Take care when lighting & extinguishing candles.
- 2 hands can **not** easily carry 3 things, make 2 trips if necessary.
- Robes are to be neatly returned to the closet (fastening the top snap).
- There is no right or wrong, but there is a preferred way to do things.  
If you forget or get mixed up, keep going.

Should you get stuck, watch the Priest or Deacon. They will always be there to guide you.

# WHEN TO ARRIVE

Altar Servers should arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. This will allow you time to put on robes, light candles, etc. If you arrive late, the Mass Steward may have found a replacement 10 minutes before Mass begins. If this happens, please take your place in the congregation.

***If you are unable to attend on your scheduled day, it is your responsibility to find a replacement. Please consult the Ministries Schedule handout for contact information.***

# BEFORE MASS BEGINS

- **Go to the Sacristy to get dressed. Put on robe, rope belt (cincher) & cross.**

The robe should be long enough to cover your clothes, but short enough that you are not tripping or stepping on it when you walk. If you are having trouble finding a robe that is the correct size, remember that it is better to choose a robe that is too short rather than one that is too long.

- The rope belt should be a length, that when tied, hangs to your knee.
- The cross should be tucked under the hood of the robe.

Once dressed, check yourself in the mirror (*behind the Sacristy door*) to see if you look neat and tidy. If you need help, ask your partner.

- **Check the white board for special instructions.**

Beside the door leading to the Parish offices, there is a white board that will have instructions for the weekend Mass. Read this board to determine if Deacon Dave or Deacon Stephen will be helping, if the Candle of Remembrance needs to be lit, if there will be Children's Liturgy or a Baptism.

- **Candles (*Special*)**

After you are dressed, there are 2 additional candles that may need to be lit (*instructions on the white board will tell you which to light*).

The Candle of Remembrance is the candle that sits in front of the Altar (*see photo on page 3*). This candle is lit to remember those who have died.

The Paschal Candle is the big tall candle that stands beside the Baptismal Font. If there is a Baptism, the Paschal Candle is to be lit. This candle is also lit during special occasions and during the Easter season.

Ask for help if you have trouble lighting any of these candles.





- **5-10 minutes before Mass**

**NEW** Ministries Prayer - Fr. Moreno will lead all the Ministers (including Altar Servers) in prayer.

- **Candles (*Procession*)**

5 minutes before Mass, following the Ministries Prayer, 2 Procession Candles can be lit. If there is children's liturgy classes, 2 Children's Liturgy Candles will also need to be lit.

**Whenever possible, use the Candle Lighter to light candles.**

Please use 1 match or the BBQ Lighter to light the Candle Lighter (*the long brass stick with the wick that slides up and down*). Then use the Candle Lighter to light the Procession Candles. Always be careful when handling fire. You do not want burned fingers.

**NEW** Try NOT to use the tapers (slender white candles). Their wax drippings are causing clean-up problems. Use the Candle Lighter instead. If there are problems with the Candle Lighters or they are out of wick, please ask someone for help.

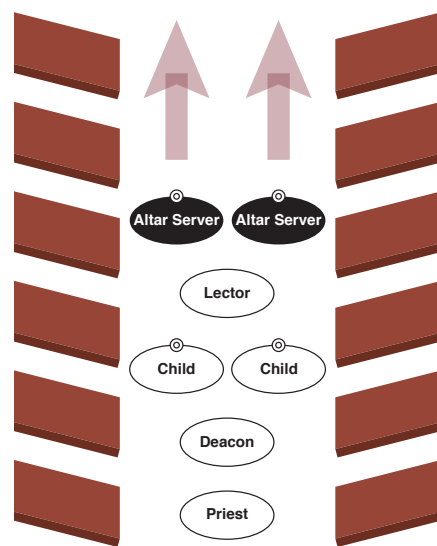
**DO NOT light the Altar Candles before Mass, they will be lit during Mass.**

After lighting the Procession Candles, go to the back of the church with the candles and wait for Mass to begin. If you are not able to carry all the candles at one time, make two trips.

# ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The Mass starts with the Commentator welcoming the congregation. Opening announcements are read and a moment of silence is asked, to prepare for the celebration we are about to participate in.

- Pick up the Procession Candles (Ambo Candles) (if necessary, instruct the Children's Liturgy Candle Bearers to do the same).
- The order of the Entrance Procession is as follows:
  - 2 Altar Servers
  - Lector with the Book
  - 2 Children's Liturgy Candle Bearers
  - Deacon
  - Priest
- The Choir begins the opening hymn.
- When everyone is ready, lead the procession in.
  - Walk beside each other slowly down the centre aisle.
  - Hold the candles straight in front of you.

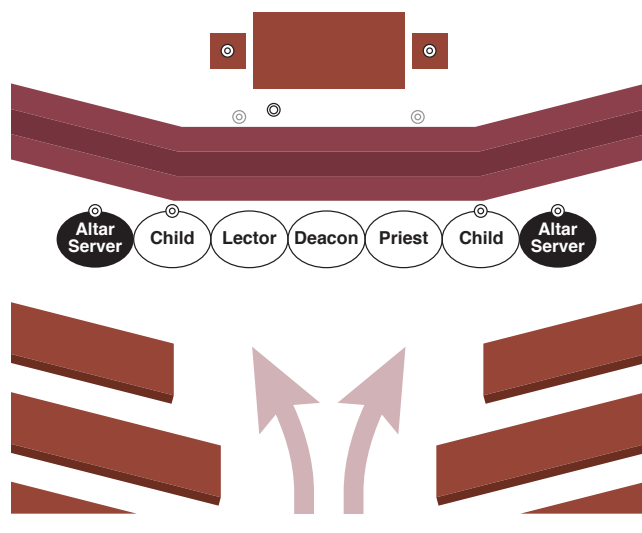


**Start of Procession**

**NEW** When you get to the front of the altar, **form a single line across the front of the altar** with one Server on the left, one Server on the right. Spread out to ensure there is room for the Priest and Deacon to be in the centre.

- The Priest bows to the altar. For safety reasons, the Altar Servers should not bow at the waist, but remain standing with their candles. (A careful bow with your head only is acceptable).

**NEW** After the bow, the Server on the left will continue to lead the procession and prepare to place the candle in the holder on the pedestals beside the Ambo (Pulpit). **Wait for the other Server and the person holding the Book of the Gospels to be in position before placing the candles into the holders.**



**End of Procession**



- The Children's Liturgy candles should be placed in front of the Altar (see photo on page 3).
- If any candles should blow out during the procession, re-light them at this time using the Candle Lighter on the Credence Table.
- Walk back to the pew and join the congregation for the opening prayer.

# CALL TO CHILDREN'S LITURGY

The Altar Servers remain at the pew. All other children at the 9:00 & 10:45 Masses (*during the school months*), will be invited by the Priest, to participate in the Children's Liturgy classes. He will give them a blessing and dismisses them for class.

The Children's Liturgy Leaders will carry the Children's Liturgy Candles to class.

## OPENING PRAYER, READING OF THE WORD & HOMILY

The Altar Servers should try to set a good example for the congregation. Remain respectful and attentive at all times during Mass. Listen to the First Reading, say the response during the Psalm, and listen to the Second Reading, the Gospel and the Homily.

## BAPTISM

If there is a Baptism scheduled during the Mass, it will usually occur in 2 parts. The first part is at the beginning of Mass to introduce the person(s) to be Baptized. The second part is the Baptism Rite that occurs following the Homily.

- One Altar Server may be asked to hold the prayer book. Stand close to the Priest or Deacon holding the prayer book open with both hands. Although the Priest or Deacon may need to move closer toward the person being Baptized, remain standing in one place. If your position needs to change, the Priest or Deacon will instruct you to do so.
- The second Altar Server will then be asked to hold the oils and candle. Patiently hold each item, one at a time, until the Priest or Deacon asks for them. First hold the oil labelled CAT. After it has been used, exchange it for the oil labelled CHR. After it has been used, exchange it for the box and candle. If the Priest or Deacon only give the candle to the Baptism family, continue to hold the box until after the Baptism Rite is over and the candle has been blown out. Then give the box to the Baptism family.
- If neither Altar Server is asked to hold the prayer book, one Altar Server will hold the oils and the other Server the candle. Patiently hold these items until the Priest or Deacon asks for them.



## RECALL THE CHILDREN FROM LITURGY

(9:00 & 10:45 Masses)

- After the Homily (*or after a Baptism*), both servers go to call the children from their classes. One server will go to the Sacristy and the U of C Lounge, the other server to the Basement Lounge.
- Knock on the door of these rooms and wait until a leader opens the door. Tell the person who responds that it is time to return.

Your queues to recall the children — after the Homily the Priest will return to his chair, pause a moment, then start the Creed — if the Priest was sitting, he will stand to start the Creed — following these actions the Altar Servers should leave to recall the Children.

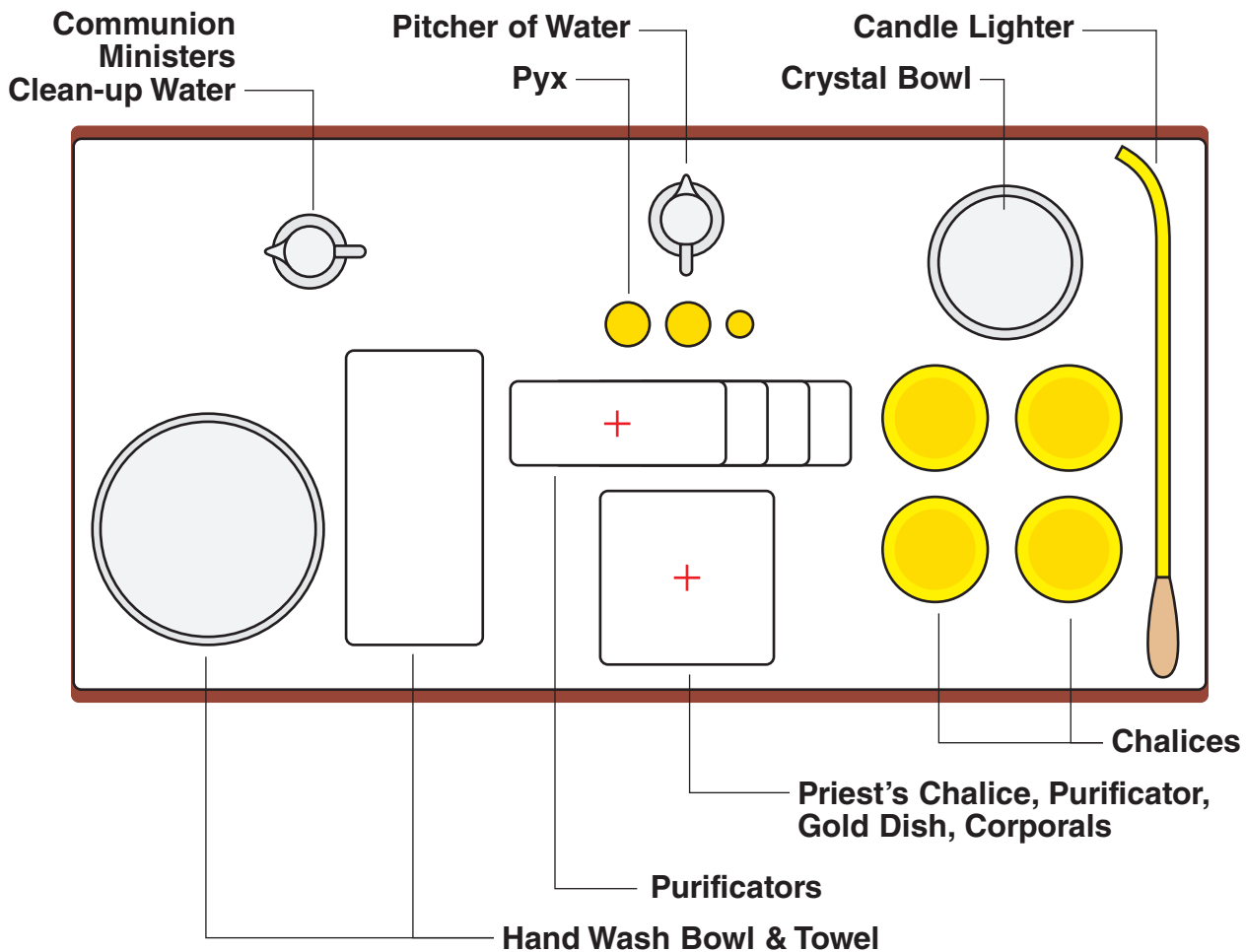
# PREPARING THE TABLE OF THE LORD

## Credence Table Layout



At the start of Mass, the Altar will have nothing on it. Then as Communion is prepared, items from the Credence Table will be brought to the Altar. Following the distribution of Communion the Altar will be cleaned and cleared so that at the end of Mass, the Altar will appear as it started, with nothing on it. The Altar Servers will assist the Priest or Deacon with both the preparation and clearing of the Altar.

The Credence Table is the table behind where the Priest and Deacon sit. At the start of Mass, it should look similar to the illustration below.



Just after the Ushers have started to take collection, the Altar Servers will need to begin the Preparation of the Lord's Table (*preparation for Communion*). There are a number of steps to this preparation and it is important to complete these steps in the proper order.

*Think of these steps like setting table for a formal dinner at home. You would start with candles, place mats and napkins. Then you would add plates, glasses and cutlery on top of the place mats and napkins. Then when everything is set, the meal is brought to the table.*

## One Altar Server

- Light Altar Candles



**1** Using the Candle Lighter from the Credence table, one Server will light the Candle Lighter using the flame from the Ambo Candles (Procession Candles).

When lighting multiple candles, carefully light the candle furthest away first. **DO NOT** reach over lit candles with your robes.

## The Other Altar Server



- Move Priest's Chalice to Altar



**1** From the Credence Table, take the Priest's Chalice, Purificator, Paten (gold plate) and Corporals to the Altar. Use two hands placing one hand on top to ensure none of the items fall.

- Move Purificators to Altar

**2** From the Credence Table, take the 4 Purificators to the Altar. This can be done as the Priest or Deacon is unfolding the Corporals on the Altar. They are to be placed along the lower right side of the Altar.

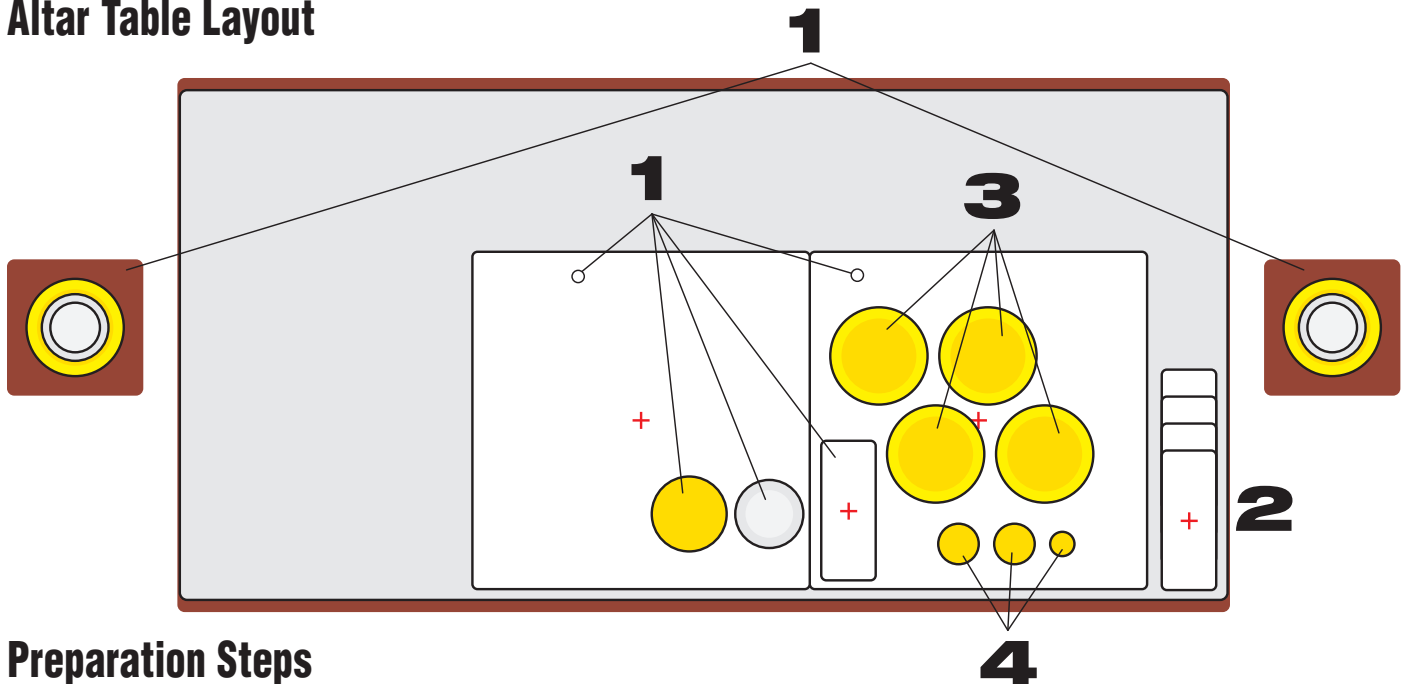
**NOTE:** The Corporals are like the place mats at our formal dinner at home. They must be opened first before you can place the Chalices onto them. If the Priest or Deacon are still unfolding the Corporals, patiently wait for them to finish.

## Both Altar Servers

- Move 4 Chalices to Altar. Then, if they are there, move Pyxes to Altar.

**3** From the Credence Table, take 2 Chalices each and place them on the right Corporal. The Priest or Deacon will move them as necessary. **4** Should there be any Pyxes on the Credence Table, take them to the Altar as well.

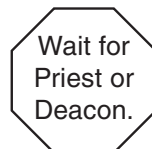
## Altar Table Layout



## Preparation Steps

- 1** Light Candles
- 1** Priest's Chalice

**2** Purificators



**3** Chalices

**4** Pyx

# OFFERTORY PROCESSION

The Offertory Procession occurs toward the end of the collection of offering. The Priest will stand and walk to the front of the Altar to meet the Offertory Family where the Eucharistic Gifts will be received.

- If the Priest is serving Mass alone, both Altar Servers will join the Priest to help receive the gifts. One Server on either side of the Priest.



If the Deacon is there to help, only 1 Altar Servers will need to join the Priest and Deacon to help receive the gifts. The Server will be on the Priest's left side.

**NOTE:** If you are the Server who is standing beside the Priest on his left side, it is **GOOD MANNERS** to walk behind him and not in front.



The Priest will take the various Eucharistic Gifts from the Offertory Family and hand them to his helpers.

**It is important to wait for all the gifts to be received before taking them to the Altar.**

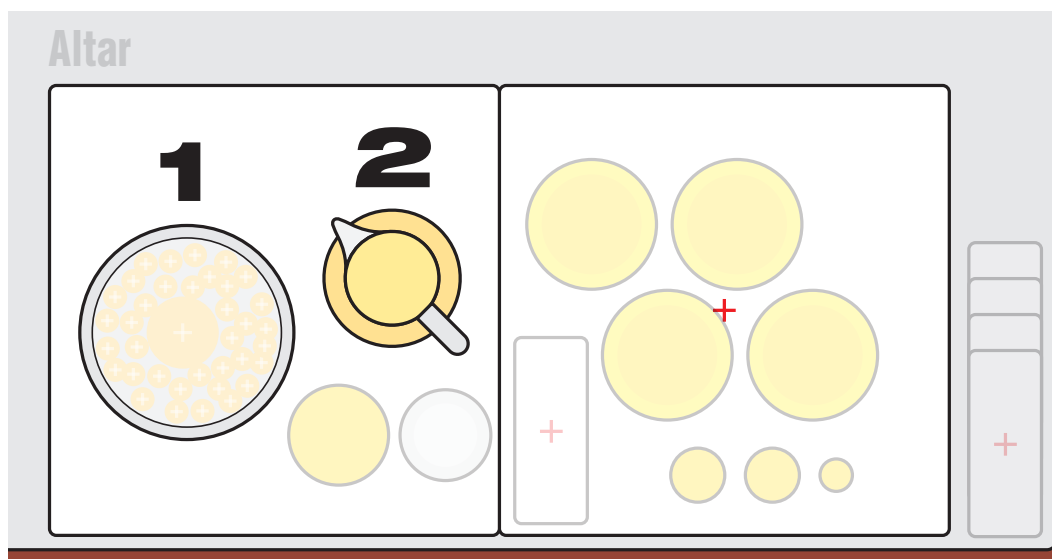


If the Offertory Basket is the first gift to be received and it is passed to you, turn and place the basket on the steps behind you. Then return beside the Priest

until all the Gifts have been received. When the Priest moves forward to bless the Offertory Family, the Altar Servers and/or Deacon will turn and walk to the back of the Altar, place the Crystal Bowl and Pitcher on the Corporal in the centre. The Altar Servers will then walk to the Credence Table to get ready for the Preparation of the Gifts.

When the Deacon is helping, the other Altar Server will wait at the Credence Table.

- **1** If the Crystal Bowl of Hosts is passed to you, wait beside the Priest until all Gifts have been received. When the Priest moves forward to bless the Offertory Family, carry the bowl to the Altar and place it on the Corporal in the centre (*see picture below*). Then walk to the Credence Table to get ready for the Preparation of the Gifts.
- **2** If the Pitcher of Wine is passed to you, wait beside the Priest until all Gifts have been received. When the Priest moves forward to bless the Offertory Family, carry the bowl to the Altar and place it on the Corporal in the centre (*see picture below*). Then walk to the Credence Table to get ready for the Preparation of the Gifts.



# PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

In the Preparation of the Gifts, the Altar Servers will have 3 duties to perform.

## One Altar Server



- Takes small Pitcher of Water to the Altar for the mixing of the Wine and Water

On the Credence Table one Altar Server will bring one of the small Pitchers of Water to the Altar and patiently wait until it is needed.

This is the part of the Mass where the Priest or Deacon will use the small Pitcher of water and poured a small amount into each Chalice to mix the Wine with the Water. The Priest or Deacon will often exchange the Pitcher of Water for the empty Wine Pitcher.



- Return the empty Wine Pitcher to the Credence Table.

If not handed to you, approach the Altar and carefully take the empty Wine Pitcher and return

it to the Credence Table. Immediately return to the Altar. Wait until the small Pitcher of Water is returned to you, or carefully take it from the Altar.

- After these 3 duties are complete, both Altar Servers return to their pew.

**NOTE:** On the Credence Table there are 2 Pitchers of Water (see picture on page 6). One pitcher will be used by the Altar Servers for the Preparation of the Gifts and the other will be used by the Eucharistic Ministers to clean the Chalices once the Blood of Christ has been consumed.

## CONSECRATION OF THE BODY AND BLOOD — BELLS

The Bells will be rung during the Consecration of the Body and Blood of Christ.



- During the Eucharistic Prayer, just after the Holy Holy, the congregation will kneel. At this point both Altar Servers will walk to the front of the Altar and kneel (*one Server on the left, one on the right*).
- When moving or holding the bells, try not to jingle them.

- **FIRST RING** — The Priest blesses the Body and will say...  
“...this is my body which will be given up for you.” As the Priest raises the Body, this is your queue to Ring the Bells.



Give the Bells a good shake. Keep ringing for a count of 3 and then stop. Let the Bells “echo out” until they no longer make a sound. As the Bells echo the Priest will lower the Body. If the Priest continues to keep the Body raised, DO NOT start ringing the Bells again.

## The Other Altar Server



- Prepares to wash the Priest's Hands

On the Credence Table the other Altar

Server will drape the Towel over one arm and then pick up the Glass Bowl with both hands. Approach the Altar and stand beside the Server with the small Pitcher of Water.

### LEAVE THE SECOND SMALL PITCHER OF WATER ON THE CREDESCENCE TABLE.

When the Priest approaches the Altar Servers, he will place his hands over the Glass Bowl. The Server with the small Pitcher will pour water onto his hands.

**NOTE:** Fr. Moreno will wash his hands. Keep pouring water until he stops washing.

The Priest will dry his hands with the Towel.

When the Priest has finished, both Servers return to the Credence Table (*placing the Glass Bowl, Towel and Pitcher of Water neatly on the table*).

- **SECOND RING** — The Priest blesses the Blood and will say...  
 “...do this in memory of me.” As the Priest raises the Chalice, this is your queue to Ring the Bells.  
 Give the Bells a good shake. Keep ringing for a count of 3 and then stop. Let the Bells “echo out” until they no longer make a sound. As the Bells echo the Priest will lower the Chalice. If the Priest continues to keep the Chalice raised, DO NOT start ringing the Bells again.
- The Priest will say the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer and the Bells can carefully be moved back to their place in front of the Altar.

## GREAT AMEN

- When the congregation stands, so should the Altar Servers.
- Then, turn and walk to the pew and remain standing.

## LORD’S PRAYER

- Say the Lord’s Prayer with the congregation.

## SIGN OF PEACE

- Offer the sign of peace to each other.



- On the right hand portion of the Credence Table (*usually close to where the Chalices were found*), there should be a Crystal Bowl. One Altar Server will bring this Crystal Bowl from the Credence Table to the Altar.

If this bowl is not on the side table, don’t worry, it may be in the Tabernacle and a Eucharistic Minister will bring it to the Altar.

- When complete, return to the pew and remain standing.

## LAMB OF GOD

The Eucharistic Ministers will walk and stand behind the Altar.

- When the congregation kneels after the Lamb of God, the Altar Servers will kneel in front of the pew.

## COMMUNION

The Priest will serve Communion to the Eucharistic Ministers at the Altar. The Priest and Eucharistic Ministers will then come down to serve Communion to the congregation.

- The Altar Servers are first to receive Communion.



If there was a small Pyx moved from the Credence Table to the Altar, the Priest may need help holding this vessel until the person who will receive this Body of Christ comes forward. Patiently stand on the right side of the Priest until it is needed.





## CLEANING & CLEARING OF THE ALTAR

Once everyone has received Communion, the Altar must be cleaned and cleared.

The Priest or Deacon will do the cleaning but they will require help from the Altar Servers.

- When the Priest or Deacon return to the Altar, the Altar Servers will approach the Altar standing in front of the Priest's and Deacon's chairs. The first part of the clearing is to transfer the remaining Body of Christ to the Ciborium, which in turn will be placed in the Tabernacle.
- After the Minister leaves the Altar with the Ciborium, the bowls that were used during Communion can be moved from the Altar to the Credence Table. The Priest or Deacon may hand these bowls to one Altar Server or you may be asked to take them from the Altar.
- At the same time, the other Altar Server will bring the small Pitcher of Water to the Altar. This will be used to clean the Priest's Chalice. When the Priest or Deacon is finished, he will return the Pitcher to the Altar Server who will take it back to the Credence Table.
- Finally, the Corporals will be folded and stacked with the Purificator and Paten (gold plate) on the Priest's Chalice. One Altar Server will pick-up the Chalice, placing one hand on top to ensure nothing falls when it is moved back to the Credence Table.
- Once complete, the Altar Servers can return to their pew together.

## FINAL PRAYER & BLESSING

The Congregation will stand for the Final Prayer. The final hymn begins and the Priest will walk to the Altar and kiss it. He will then walk down the front steps to the front of the Altar.

- The Altar Servers will walk and stand on either side of the Priest.
- Watch the Priest — when he bows, you also bow to the Altar.
- Then immediately turn and slowly walk up the centre aisle to lead the Closing Procession out.

**REMEMBER:** the Altar Servers lead the Opening Procession in and Closing Procession out.

## AFTER MASS

Mass ends when the choir has finished the final hymn.

- Blow out all candles. When blowing out candles, place your hand behind the candle when you blow them out. Once again be careful not to burn yourself when using fire.
- If you prefer, use the candle snuffer (stored in the Sacristy) to extinguish any lit candles.
- Help the Mass Steward clear the items from the Credence Table to the Sacristy.
- Finally, in the Sacristy, take off Cross, Rope Belt and Robe. Hang them neatly in the closet.

**NOTE:** To help prevent robes from falling to the bottom of the wardrobe, please fasten the top snap after hanging it on the hanger.

*Thank you for your help!*