

# GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH ALTAR SERVER MANUAL



Good Shepherd Catholic Church  
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Deacons:  
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June 1, 2022

To the Altar Servers,

You have expressed interest in actively participating in Mass by serving on the altar. Serving at Mass is a special privilege. It allows you to be close to the altar, to carry the cross, to carry the light of Christ, to hold the book of prayers and most importantly, to learn to understand the rites of our holy faith. Altar servers are an important part of our parish and they add so much to the celebration.

It is important to note that this is a very important liturgical ministry and you should be encouraged to participate fully. Once you have completed training, you will begin serving at the weekend Masses as soon as you are ready to volunteer.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask Fr. Michael, Fr. Julius, Deacon Rommel, Deacon Al, Deacon Bill, or any of the Leads.

Welcome to the Good Shepherd Catholic Church Altar Servers! Service to God and one another is an important aspect of our Christian life. All of us are called to share our time and talents, to help wherever we can, for the Glory of God. The Good Shepherd community is tremendously proud of and grateful for the youth in our parish who have committed themselves to this ministry. To be an active participant in Mass is very special. By serving God in the church, you are also learning to serve God outside the church by helping people who are in need. Fr. Michael, Fr. Julius, Deacon Rommel, Deacon Al, Deacon Bill, and the Teen Leads welcome you and pray that you will learn to understand the rites of our holy faith and serve the church with joy and reverence.

In Christ's Peace,

#### **Altar Server Teen Leads:**

Ginelle Tabotabo, Class of 2024, Christian Brothers  
Nate Lim, Class of 2023, Franklin High School  
Jonathan Tomeldan, Class of 2026  
Alex Potter, Class of 2025, Christian Brothers  
Susan Fukuda, Class of 2025, Christian Brothers  
Lissette Jones, Class of 2025 Christian Brothers  
Justin Aquino, Class of 2025, Franklin High School  
Maxwell Tran, Class of 2025, Monterey Trail High School  
Kyla Tapiador, Class of 2025, Franklin High School  
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Anissa Craig, Class of 2023, Franklin High School  
Kiara Yalan, Class of 2024, Christian Brothers  
Lorenzo Bautista, Class of 2024, Christian Brothers  
Anna Potter, Class of 2025, Christian Brothers  
Jaden Ducusin, Class of 2025, Franklin High School  
Santino Ote, Class of 2026, Franklin High School  
Isabella Ramos, Class of 2025, St. Francis  
Derryn Pamittan, Class of 2026, Franklin High School  
Jared Adao, Class of 2025, Franklin High School  
Theone Divinagracia, Class of 2024, St. Francis  
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#### **Altar Server Ministry Adult Leads**

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## BASIC GUIDELINES AND RULES

The following are a few guidelines that must be followed by all Altar Servers:

- Be punctual – Arrive **at least 20 minutes prior to the start of Mass**. If you are an Altar Server attending Mass and do not see 3 Altar Servers, you are welcome and encouraged to assist.
- Dress appropriately – Please be sure to dress appropriately. Boys should wear long pants (jeans are okay), not shorts. Shoes for both boys and girls should be clean and cover the foot. Do not wear flip flops or sandals. No heeled shoes. No distracting shoes (colors, lights, sounds). Be sure to select an alb that covers your ankles. When you are finished with serving, be sure to spray and hang up your alb and cincture and place it in the appropriate size area on the rack. Look for the laundry schedule to see if your alb is due for laundering.
- Sign in – When you arrive, you should sign in first in the Conference Room in the narthex area. There is a separate Altar Server sign-in sheet that you need to sign and select which position you wish to serve during Mass.
- Act with proper decorum – You are an example when you are participating in the liturgical celebration. You should participate in all of the prayers, responses and hymns. Do not whisper among yourselves unless it relates to your tasks as an altar server. If you need to yawn, be sure to cover your mouth. Remember to practice “quiet” hands. Keep them still in front of you, behind you or in prayer.
- Pay attention – Your job as an altar server is to serve in whatever way you are needed. Be sure to pay attention to what is going on in the Mass so you can assist whenever the priest or the deacon may need your help.
- Do not be a “no show” – By taking on this ministry of being an Altar Server, you are making a very important commitment to your parish community and to the priests and deacons. The Altar Server Leads will work as much as possible to accommodate your schedule. If you cannot make your scheduled Mass for whatever reason, you should immediately try to get a substitute by sending an email or calling another altar server. Don’t forget to erase your name from the Sign Up Genius so others can volunteer.

If you cannot get a substitute, call or email the Altar Server Adult lead to let them know that you are unable to serve and that you were unable to find a substitute. (Do not call the parish office). *The worst thing you can do is to simply not show up.*

**If you are a “no show” three times in one quarter, you will be dropped from the upcoming altar server schedule.**

## THE MASS

You may or may not know that there are many different parts to the Mass. As Altar Servers, you have different responsibilities during each phase of the Mass. Please familiarize yourself with the parts of the Mass.

### Introductory Rite

Entrance Song  
Greeting  
Penitential Rite  
Gloria  
Opening Prayer

### Liturgy of the Word

First Reading  
Responsorial Psalm  
Second Reading  
Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation  
Gospel  
Homily  
Profession of Faith  
General Intercessions

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts/Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Gifts  
Eucharistic Prayer/Ringing of the gong

### Communion Rite

Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Breaking of the Bread  
Communion  
Communion Song  
Prayer after Communion

### Concluding Rite

Final Blessing  
Dismissal  
Closing Song

## **PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD**

### **Posture**

Posture is how you are using the parts of your body at a particular time. A server has to carry out a number of different actions at Mass, so there are a number of different postures.

### **Walking**

We do a lot of walking every day and sometimes we get sloppy as we do it. Always walk with your back straight and your head held high.

### **Bowing**

When you bow to someone or something at Mass, it should be a smooth forward inclining of your head and shoulders. When you bow to the altar, bow deeply at the waist and bring yourself to your full height. When you bow to the priest, bow your head slowly and gracefully. Never walk and bow at the same time; stop before bowing.

### **Genuflecting**

When you genuflect, keep your hands in front of your chest while you go down on your right knee. Keep your body straight. Be sure that your alb is not going to trip you on the way down or up.

### **Kneeling**

When you kneel, your body should be upright and your hands should be in front of your chest well above your waist. If you lean your body forwards or backwards, you will hurt the muscles in your back or the ligaments in your knee.

### **Standing**

Always stand up straight with both feet firmly on the floor.

### **Sitting**

Sit down on your chair carefully and gracefully. Once you are seated, sit tall and do not slouch. Place your hands on your lap or flat on your thighs in a relaxed manner. Watch how the priest holds his hands and do as he does.

### **Hands**

Unless you are sitting down or carrying something, your hands should be held as if in prayer, fingers pointing upward. Keep your hands high on your chest.

### **Eyes**

During Mass, **always look towards the place where the action is happening.** When a lector is reading the Scripture, you should be looking at the lector or following the reading in the missal.

**In General** - Try not to fidget, play with your hair or your cincture. If you make a mistake, do not get flustered and just move on.

## Summary of Duties of Altar Server Positions

### A. All Altar Servers:

Before Mass:

- All altar Servers should sign in in the Conference Room in the narthex area. There is a separate "Altar Server Sign-In Sheet" that altar servers need to sign and choose the position you wish to do.
- If you are the first one to come, check if the four candles are lit. If not, light the candles.
- After dressing up, proceed to the narthex immediately to join in prayer with the priest, deacon and other liturgical ministers.

During Mass:

- Prayer over the Gifts: All altar servers will kneel in their place facing the sanctuary.
- All altar servers should remain in the sanctuary during the Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace.
- Receiving Communion: All altar servers should line up along the west side of the sanctuary. All should receive the body of Christ. If you don't wish to receive the precious blood, cross your arms. Be sure to kneel back down and pray first before getting back up to clean the altar.

After Mass:

- Be sure to hang up your alb and cincture in the proper place. Spay the albs if hanging them or send them to launder.
- *Candle Bearers* should make sure to extinguish the candles before leaving – please do this task in your altar server garment, not your street clothes.

### B. Altar Server: Cross Bearer

- Before Mass, remove the processional cross from its holder outside the entrance doors and proceed to the narthex.
- Before Mass, check the seat on the sanctuary to make sure the Sacramentary is on the Cross-Book Bearer's seat.
- *Cross Bearer* will start the procession. Be careful not to hit the Exit Sign.
- *Cross Bearer* will go *right of the sanctuary*. Bow your head when the priest does it.
- The *Cross Bearer* will also place the Sacramentary Book on the altar – on the left side of the altar.
- The *Cross Bearer* will ring the gong three times when the priest raises the Host and again when the priest raises the Chalice.
- Recessional: *Cross Bearer* will lead the recessional and return the Cross to the original position.

### C. Altar Servers: Candle Bearers

- Before Mass, *Candle Bearers* should light the processional candles located in the sanctuary and

proceed to the narthex.

- During the Entrance Procession, *Candle Bearers* will follow *Book-Cross Bearer*. One will go to the left and the other to go on the right of the sanctuary. Bow your heads when the priest does it.
- *Candle Bearers* should return the candles back to the original position. All 3 altar servers will bow to the tabernacle before sitting down. They will be seated down and to the left of the priest.
- When the choir is singing the “Alleluia” and as soon as the priest stands, the two *Candle Bearers* will walk with the candles on each side of the priest or deacon. Altar servers will pause in the middle of the altar facing the congregation then will continue with the procession. The *Candle Bearers* will stand across from each other next to the ambo – alongside of the priest or deacon. They will hold the candles during the reading of the Gospel. When the Gospel Reading is finished, return the candles to their holders. Face the tabernacle together and bow before being seated.
- Recessional: *Candle Bearers* will retrieve the candles from the holders and line up for the recession. One *Candle Bearer* will stand at one side of the priest (or deacon if present) and other will stand at the other side. Watch for the priest to genuflect, and then bow with him.
- After Mass has concluded (choir has finished singing): *Candle Bearers* will return to the sanctuary and place the candles back on their stands and extinguish the candle. Also make sure the four candles on the side of the altar are extinguished as soon as the recessional song is finished.

## Responsibilities by Parts of the Mass

### A. Before Mass:

- Altar Servers should sign in first in the Conference Room in the narthex area. There is a separate Altar Server sign-in sheet that you need to sign and select which position you wish to serve during Mass.
- If you are the first altar server to arrive, check to see if the altar candles have been lit. If not, use one of the strikers to light the four altar candles.
- If you are a *Candle Bearer*, light the processional candle located in the sanctuary and proceed to the narthex.
- If you are the *Cross Bearer*, remove the processional cross from its holder outside the entrance doors and proceed to the narthex.
- All should gather in the conference room off of the narthex to join in prayer with the priest, deacon and other liturgical ministers.

### B. Entrance Procession:

- *Cross Bearer* will start the procession. Be careful. *The cross is very tall and make sure it does not hit the "Exit" Sign.*
- *Candle Bearers* will walk together behind the book bearer.
- *Cross Bearer* and one *Candle Bearer* will go to the right of the sanctuary; the other *Acolyte* will go to the left side of the sanctuary. Bow your heads when the priest does.
- *Cross Bearer* will place the cross in the stand on the right side of the sanctuary.

### C. Sanctuary Seating:

- Altar Servers will be seated in the chairs to the left of the altar.

### D. Gospel Acclamation

- When the choir is singing the "Alleluia" and as soon as the priest stands, the two *Candle Bearers* will walk with the candles on each side of the priest or deacon. The *Candle Bearers* will stand across from each other next to the ambo – alongside of the priest or deacon. They will face each other and hold the candles during the reading of the Gospel. When the Gospel reading is finished, return the candles to their holders and take your seats.

### E. Prayer over the Gifts:

- Ring gong 3 times slowly when Father raises the hosts and wine
- When the community concludes saying, "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name..." **all altar servers will kneel** at their seats.

### F. Sign of Peace:

- All altar servers should remain in the sanctuary. Please *do not go down* for the Sign of Peace with your family.

### **G. Receiving Communion:**

- Line up as far over on the sanctuary. All altar servers should receive the Body of Christ. If you choose not to receive the Precious Blood, just cross your arms. After you receive Communion, kneel in front of your seat and say your personal prayer before you clean up the altar.

### **H. Recessional:**

- Once the priest approaches and kisses the altar, the *Book-Cross Bearer* will retrieve the cross from the holder; *Candle Bearers* will retrieve the candles from the holders and then line up for the recession.
- *Cross Bearer* will lead the recessional, followed by *Candle Bearers*.

### **I. After Mass:**

- *Cross Bearer* will return the cross to the stand at the rear of the church.
- *Candle Bearers* will return to the sanctuary and place the candles back on their stands and extinguish the candle. *Please wait for the final hymn to be done before doing this.*
- One of the *Candle Bearers* should also extinguish the four altar candles.
- Return to the Altar Server Room and return your alb and cincture and make sure to hang them behind the correct size. PLEASE DO NOT THROW THEM ON THE FLOOR.

## **Thurifer Training Manual**

### **Outline of Incense During Mass**

Incense is used in the following manner:

- a) during the Entrance Procession (Thurifer leads procession);
- b) at the beginning of Mass to incense the Cross and altar;
- c) at the procession before the Gospel and the proclamation of the Gospel;
- d) after the bread and chalice have been placed on the altar, to incense the offerings, the cross, and the altar, as well as the Presider and the people;
- e) at the elevation of the host and chalice during the Consecration of the Eucharistic Prayer;
- f) and in the Recessional.

Incense is also used during the Easter Season, Solemnity Masses and Funeral Liturgies:

- a) for the incensation of the Paschal Candle
- b) for the reverence of the remains of the deceased during Funeral Liturgies as a sign of the dignity of the human body and of the Resurrection of Christ.

#### **The Use of Incense:**

##### **Three Swings**

**“The following are incensed with 3 swings of the thurible:** the Blessed Sacrament; a relic of the Holy Cross or image of the Lord; the offerings of bread and wine during the Preparation of the gifts; the Altar Cross; the Book of the Gospels; the Paschal Candle; priest celebrants; and the assembly.”

##### **Two Swings**

**“The following are incensed with 2 swings of the thurible at the beginning of the Sacred Liturgy during the incensation of the altar:** relics and images of Saints.”

##### **One Swing**

**“The altar is to be incensed with single swings of the thurible.”**

## **Thurifer Procedures**

### **Before Mass**

- Arrive 30 minutes before Mass to prepare yourself for mass.
- Place stand for thurible near the altar at the edge of where the Altar Servers sit. Make sure that the incense boat is full. (MC will assist in putting stand out and making sure incense boat is full)
- Light 2 charcoal (breaking them apart may help lighting easier) 15 minutes before Mass outside in an open area
- Be careful of sparks to clothing/vestment/yourself and never place thurible on Oak Tables or credence tables. Place lighted charcoal (star side up) in thurible
- Before Mass, stand with thurible and boat in an open, high-ceiling space.

### **Procession and Beginning of Mass**

- Add 2 scoops of incense before procession begins.
- Lead procession swinging thurible and carrying boat
- Hold thurible with thumb in ring, hand in a fist. Swing smoking thurible forward and backward by moving wrist slightly (not your arm). Pace procession slowly, reverently leading assembly into prayer, filling the space with sweet fragrance.
- When arriving at steps, stand beside the Clergy
- Take care not to hit candles/plants while swinging thurible. Bow head when the Presider bows
- Walk up steps toward Presider at Altar
- Exchange the boat first, and hold thurible while presider puts incense in, then exchange the thurible with Presider. Be careful, thurible will be hot!
- Give your attention to the objects that the Presider incenses
- Receive thurible back from Presider
- Walk down steps; place thurible and boat on the stand.
- Return to your seat closest to the thurible.

### **Gospel Acclamation and Incensing of Book of Gospels**

- At start of Gospel Acclamation, remove thurible and boat from stand, and take thurible and boat to the Deacon. If there is no Deacon then hold thurible for the Presider/Bishop to put incense in the thurible.
- After the presider or Bishop blesses the thurible, receive the boat and thurible and begin the procession around the Altar in front of the 1<sup>st</sup> Candle bearer.

- When the Deacon or Presider priest arrives at the ambo with Book of Gospels, stand behind him and the ambo. Exchange the thurible with Deacon or Presider celebrant.
- Give your attention to the Book of the Gospel while it is being incensed. Receive thurible back from Deacon/Presider celebrant.
- Step back to a location behind Deacon/ Presider celebrant.
- Gently swing thurible throughout Gospel reading. Ensure you do not block line of sight from ambo to Presider's chair (if Presider not doing the Gospel).
- Give your attention to the proclamation of Gospel
- After "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ" return thurible and boat to stand
- During homily, check the thurible to see if there is enough charcoal and that it is still lit. If not lit or enough charcoal add 1 charcoal, star-side down; using tongs (leave the tongs, extra charcoal, and lighter near the stand). If incense is not burning well, light the additional charcoal prior to adding to thurible.
- Return to your seat for Preparation of the Gifts

*Not done at this time due to COVID.*

- *When the Presider and Altar Servers go to receive the Gifts, remove thurible and boat from stand.*
- *After the Altar Servers receive the gifts and place them on the altar, stand down one step, near the cross.*
- *After the Presider has given the wine pitcher to Altar Server, he will motion for you.*

**Once the gifts are on the altar:**

- Hold thurible for presider to put incense in. Exchange thurible with Deacon/ Presider.
- Give the thurible to the Deacon or Presider. Give your attention to the gifts and Altar while they are being incensed. If no Deacon is present, receive thurible back from Presider celebrant. Presider will bow, Thurifer will bow and incense presider with three swings of the thurible and then bow again.
- This next step will be done by the Deacon or a Presider but in some circumstances you may be asked to help. Turn and go in front of altar at the top of the steps. Bow to the assembly, swing the thurible two times to the front, turn and swing thurible 2x to the left side, and turn and swing thurible 2x to the right side of the church. Bow again facing the front. Walk back and return thurible and boat to stand, and return to your seat.
- Move to the front of the altar on the ground level during the Holy, Holy, Holy. (2 scoops of incense are placed on the coals in the thurible during the Epiclesis). Note: The epiclesis, in which, by means of particular invocations, the Church implores the power of the Holy Spirit

that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated, that is, become Christ's Body and Blood, and that the unblemished sacrificial Victim to be consumed in Communion may be for the salvation of those who will partake of it.

- When the Presider lifts up the Blessed Sacrament, incense it (3 swings, 3 times). Recession  
When the Presider leaves the Chair (after the final blessing):
- Add 2 scoops of incense to thurible if needed.
- Take thurible and boat and back to the stand and take your seat.
- Lead recession at a faster pace than was done for the procession, (normal walking pace) leading assembly into their mission for Christ in the world. After Mass
- Dispose of charcoals and incense in thurible in a bowl with water in the back room. Ask the MC for help if needed.
- Be certain that charcoals are complete extinguished, if not get a cup of water and extinguish!
- The MC will help you extinguish and return thurible and boat to bathroom in vesting room unless needed at the next Mass and return stand, unless needed at the next Mass. Reminders
- Anytime you are standing still with the thurible, gently swing the thurible to keep air flowing through the thurible.
- When swinging the thurible, keep your elbow close to your side.
- Use the tongs for picking up and loading the charcoal to avoid getting charcoal on your hands or alb.
- Make sure the charcoal is well lit before placing in the thurible.
- When incensing the congregation, do not lean into the swings, but keep your feet together and swing only using your wrist.

## GLOSSARY

Below are some terms with which Altar Servers should be familiar:



**Alb:** A white robe worn by deacons, priests and sometimes by altar servers during Mass.

**Credence table:** The table at the rear of the altar on which the chalice, water, bowls, goblets, towels and sometimes hosts are kept.

**Cruet:** The vessel that holds the water which is added to the wine during Mass.

**Ambo:** The stand used to proclaim the Readings, Gospel and Homily.

**Flagon:** The large vessel that holds the wine.



**Cassock:** The black garment worn by the altar server under the surplice.

**Gift table:** Located in the center aisle at the rear of the Church, this table holds the bread and wine which is brought up from the congregation during the Preparation of the Altar and Gifts.

**Chalice:** The cup used by the priest to consecrate the wine during Mass.

**Gospel book:** A book containing Gospel readings that the deacon carries in the procession.



**Chasuble:** The outer garment worn by the priest over his stole and alb. There are a variety of colors to fit the various seasons and feasts of the Church.

**Holy oils:** The three types of blessed oil (used for baptisms, confirmation and the anointing of the sick) stored in bottles at the rear of the altar.

**Host:** The consecrated body of Christ.



**Ciborium:** The vessel used for distributing Holy Communion and for storing consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle.

**Incense:** A mixture of aromatic spices burned in the censor. The smoke rising up symbolizes our prayers rising up to God as a “fragrant offering.”

**Incense boat:** A small container of incense with a spoon for scooping. It is held in the left hand by the thurifer while he or she swings the censor with the right hand.

**Lavabo bowl:** This is the bowl that holds the water used by the priest when he washes his hands during the *lavabo* – the ritual of hand washing during the Preparation of the Gifts.

**Lectionary:** A book of Scripture readings used at Mass and placed on the Ambo.

**Purificator:** The cloth napkins used to wipe the chalice and other cups for Communion.

**Ring of the Gong:** A signal to the congregation that the Consecration is taking place, for those that cannot see.

**Sacramentary:** The book of prayers for the Mass used by the priest for the opening prayer, the Eucharistic Prayer and the closing prayer.

**Sanctuary:** The area of the Church where the altar and ambo are located.

**Sacristy:** The room where the clergy and servers prepare themselves for the service.

**Tabernacle:** The sacred container located next to the altar used for keeping consecrated hosts in reservation.

**Thurible:** A container holding incense that is swung from a chain (used for funerals and special liturgies, such as Christmas, during Holy Week and the Easter season.)



Incense boat pictured above.

**Thurifer:** The server who swings the thurible and takes care of it during Mass.

## ST. TARCISIUS

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Tarcisius was a twelve-year-old acolyte during one of the fierce Roman persecutions of the third century, probably during that of Valerian. Each day, from a secret meeting place in the catacombs where Christians gathered for Mass, a deacon would be sent to the prisons to carry the Eucharist to those Christians condemned to die. At one point, there was no deacon to send and so St. Tarcisius, an acolyte, was sent carrying the "Holy Mysteries" to those in prison.

On the way, he was stopped by boys his own age who were not Christians but knew him as a playmate and lover of games. He was asked to join their games, but this time he refused and the crowd of boys noticed that he was carrying something. Somehow, he was also recognized as a Christian, and the small gang of boys, anxious to view the Christian "Mysteries," became a mob and turned upon Tarcisius with fury. He went down under the blows, and it is believed that a fellow Christian drove off the mob and rescued the young acolyte.

The mangled body of Tarcisius was carried back to the catacombs, but the boy died on the way from his injuries. He was buried in the cemetery of St. Callistus, and his relics are claimed by the church of San Silvestro in Capite.

In the fourth century, Pope St. Damasus wrote a poem about this "boy-martyr of the Eucharist" and says that, like another St. Stephen, he suffered a violent death at the hands of a mob rather than give up the Sacred Body to "raging dogs." His story became well known when Cardinal Wiseman made it a part of his novel *Fabiola*, in which the story of the young acolyte is dramatized and a very moving account given of his martyrdom and death.

Tarcisius, one of the patron saints of altar servers, has always been an example of youthful courage and devotion, and his story was one that was told again and again to urge others to a like heroism in suffering for their faith. In the *Passion of Pope Stephen*, written in the sixth century, Tarcisius is said to be an acolyte of the pope himself and, if so, this explains the great veneration in which he was held and the reason why he was chosen for so difficult a mission.

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