

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI
Altar Server Procedures During Mass

Procession/Opening

1. **Cross Bearer:**
 - † Leads followed by **Binder** and **Book Bearer**, whose hands are in prayer position.
 - † At base of the steps to the sanctuary, goes to the left, all others go to the right.
 - † Bows as the priest genuflects.
 - † Places the cross on the hook behind the altar and returns in front of the altar.
2. Other altar servers (**Binder** and **Book Bearer**) genuflect with the priest and deacon.
3. All altar servers then go to the right-side chairs of the congregation and STAND.
4. **Book Bearer** – *Before* the end of the *Gloria* (or the Penitential Rite, during Advent and Lent, when the *Gloria* is not said):
 - † Immediately carries the red Prayer Book (*Excerpts from the Missal*) up to the priest and stands in front of him (does not wait for “Let us pray.”). Does *not* bow to the priest.
 - † Opens book to the ribbon and remains there until the Collect Prayer is finished, then returns with book to the chair.

Liturgy of the Word

1. Servers should be seated upright, with hands in their laps and listen to the readers.
2. Gospel - all stand when Priest stands with hands in prayer position.
3. **Binder Bearer** – *Before* the end of the Creed, as the priest is standing:
 - † Immediately brings binder to the priest and deacon. Stands between the priest and deacon, turned first toward the priest. The priest will introduce the Prayers of the Faithful.
 - † Turns toward the deacon after the priest’s introduction, and then turn back toward the priest when the deacon has finished the Prayers of the Faithful, ending with the final response: usually, “Lord, hear our prayer.” (If there is no deacon, stays oriented toward the priest while the Lector reads the Prayers of the Faithful.)
 - † After the priest completes the Prayers of the Faithful - closes the binder and returns with the binder to the seat.

Offertory - Setting the Altar Part 1 (Bring everything to deacon or set it on the altar)

1. After Prayer of the Faithful, when the Offertory hymn begins, TWO altar servers come up to set the altar:
 - † Give everything to the deacon to place on the altar unless he indicates that the server should put things on the altar. If there is no deacon, please set the altar as you would normally. When crossing in front of the altar, bow to it, not to the priest.
 - † **Book Bearer** brings the Roman Missal and stand to the altar.
 - † **Binder/Cross Bearer** brings to the altar the main chalice with the pall and one purificator, the other filled chalices, and any ciboria that are on the credence table.
2. Both servers return to their seats by crossing in front of the altar and SIT until the Priest STANDS.

Offertory - Setting the Altar Part 2 (receiving the gifts)

1. **All Servers** stand and join the priest at the foot of the sanctuary to receive gifts.
2. **Cross Bearer** stands on left of priest to receive the collection basket.
3. All others on right side of priest or deacon.
4. Take whatever the priest hands to you and wait for the priest to turn around.
5. **Cross Bearer** receives the collection basket and places it under the altar from the front, or (if it is blocked) under the side of the altar by the ambo, **not** by the presider’s chair. **Cross Bearer** then returns to the seat, crossing in front of the altar and bowing to it.
6. **Book Bearer**, standing on the right, receives the wine cruet from the deacon or priest and goes with it to the credence table. **Book Bearer** and **Binder Bearer** then bring the wine and water cruets to the deacon or priest at the altar.
7. When the water and wine have been poured into the main chalice by the deacon or priest, **Book Bearer** and **Binder Bearer** return to the credence table, leaving the wine cruet there and picking up the bowl.
8. **Book Bearer** and **Binder Bearer** return with the water and bowl with the towel bring them to the priest for the *Lavabo*, the washing prayer.
9. **Book Bearer** and **Binder Bearer** return to their seats, bowing as they cross in front of the altar, and STAND.

Eucharistic Prayer/Sign of Peace/Communion

1. Servers sit and stand at the same time as the congregation in front of their seats.
2. When it is time for the sign of peace, they proceed in a single file to the priest to shake his hand.
3. **All Servers** - Line up for communion at the 1B position to the right of their seats.
4. After receiving communion when the priest goes his station, **Book Bearer** returns the Roman Missal to the credence table.
5. **Book Bearer** returns to the seat and waits for the closing, or assists with clearing the altar if needed.
6. All other altar servers return to their seats and sit until the time to clear the altar after communion.

After Communion

1. When the priest or deacon goes to the altar to purify the sacred vessels, two altar servers (**Binder Bearer** and **Cross Bearer**) bring the water cruet to the altar and wait to return the cruet and purified vessels to the credence table.
2. If there are only two altar servers, both should assist the priest or deacon with clearing the altar.

Mass Closing and Recessional

1. When the priest stands at the end of the communion meditation, **Book Bearer** carries the Prayer Book up to the priest and stands in front of him. (Do not wait for him to say “Let us pray.”) Again, do **not** bow to the priest.
2. When the priest indicates that he is done, **Book Bearer** closes the book and return to the seat.
3. **Cross Bearer** crosses in front of the altar and retrieves the cross from its hook behind the altar.
4. After the final blessing and dismissal, when the priest/deacon move to reverence the altar, all servers move to the base of the sanctuary and wait for the priest.
5. When the priest bows/genuflects, **Book Bearer** and **Binder Bearer** do the same, and **Cross Bearer** bows.
6. **All Servers** turn and recess from the church in the same order that they processed in – first **Cross Bearer**, then **Book Bearer** and **Binder Bearer** side by side, followed by the priest and deacon.

General Comments

1. Thank you for serving! It is an honor to serve at the table of the Lord. Prayerfully attend to the Lord’s presence among us during the Mass, and during the times before and after the Mass as well.
2. Servers should always be attentive – please keep track of where we are in the Mass, and be ready to act as needed, without prompting.
3. Please arrive well enough in advance to vest with the alb, a cincture of the proper color, and cross. That should be at least 15 minutes before Mass is scheduled to begin.
4. The first altar server to arrive and vest is responsible for lighting the candles on the altar.
5. Before Mass begins, please ask the deacon or priest if there is anything particularly special that is planned – such as a special blessing, or another event when they will need the binder brought up, or something else is to be done out of the ordinary.
6. If you have any question about the liturgy which you are assisting at, please ask well before Mass begins.
7. Sometimes the priest or deacon will need something done or something brought to them during the Mass. Please look at them regularly to see if they need anything during the Mass.
8. On bowing:
 - † Please do **not** bow to the priest when bringing up the Prayer Book or Binder.
 - † Altar servers bow to the **altar** when crossing in front of it, whether or not there is anyone at the altar at the time.
 - † Ministers – deacon or priest and altar servers – bow to each other on four occasions when a particular serving action is finished: (1) when setting the altar; (2) when the deacon or priest has handed the wine and water cruets back to the servers after he prepares the principal chalice; (3) when the priest hands the finger towel back to the servers after he finishes washing his hands; and (4) when the servers receive the purified vessels from the deacon or priest after communion.

These are general guidelines – a more detailed manual is to be distributed at altar server training sessions.

Peace and all good!

Dcn. Bob