

Church of St. Mary

Funeral Altar Server

Guidelines as of September 2008

Before Mass

- Arrive 30 to 40 minutes before funeral.
- Check in with presider and with sacristan to see what needs to be done and if there will be any changes to the usual tasks and what tasks will need to be taken care of after Mass by the altar server.

Tasks before Mass

- Check to see if cross is in the back of church.
- Move baptismal candle up to the front left of where the casket would be. Light candles ½ hour before the funeral.
- Bring wine and hosts to gifts table in the back. Number of hosts, EM's, and amount of wine is determined by the anticipated amount of people who would be expected to receive at the liturgy. The sacristan or the presider will have an educated guess on this number.
- Check to see if the funeral pall is in the back of church. This is usually placed on one of the chairs/pew in the very back of church near the cross.
- Check to see if bowl, water, and towel are out and placed on the credence table to be used for the handwashing. Place tray with cups, chalice, and purificators on the credence table and also any extra ciborium, if needed.
- Light two cubes of charcoal about five minutes before funeral. If you think it will be a longer funeral put in three cubes of charcoal.
- Check to see if incense is sufficient in thurible.
- Place a towel by the baptismal for resident pastor for visiting priests place the asperger at the baptismal font. For cremation, container is in the front of church and the sprinkling takes place up front.
- Place Sacramentary on the chairs for the altar servers.

During the Liturgy

- In procession, the cross bearer (funeral altar server) leads the way.
- When the presider says, "Let us Pray" the altar server brings up the Sacramentary or holds the funeral book.

If Mass is celebrated

- After Homily and Prayers of the Faithful, the altar is prepared by bringing up the Sacramentary, chalice, cups, and purificators.
- When the gifts are presented, if there are more than two items, the funeral altar server assists the presider with the reception of the gifts.
- After the gifts are received, the altar server proceeds to the credence table and brings the bowl, hand towel, and water. The hand towel is placed over your left arm. The altar server will wash the priest's hands and return these items to the credence table. If possible also remove the empty wine decanter. Then return back to your chair.
- The server kneels during the Eucharistic Prayer on the bottom step of the altar area or in the first pew nearest the work sacristy.

- After the “Our Father” and during the Sign of Peace go to the tabernacle in the Eucharistic Chapel and bring the consecrated hosts to the altar.
- The server comes forward to receive communion. After receiving, the Sacramentary is taken off the altar and placed back near the altar server’s chair.
- After communion has finished, watch to see if there is someone who is going to return the consecrated hosts back to the tabernacle in the Eucharistic Chapel. If there is no one, the altar server does this. The altar is then cleared-all remaining ciboriums, cups, and purificators are removed and placed on the credence table.

After Communion or if there is no Communion

- The priest will nod at the altar server when it is time to bring the incense. Bring the incense (in the thurible) and the censor to the presider. Give the incense to the presider. The altar server then opens the censor and holds it high so the presider can place the incense in. The presider will then incense the body while the altar server waits for the censor. The censor and thurible are then returned to the stand.
- After the invitation to the luncheon is made and as the last hymn begins, the altar server gets the cross and proceeds to the back of coffin facing the front of church. The presider comes down, bows to the altar, and then turns. As the presider leaves the crossbearer turns and leads the procession out of church walking slowly. Weather permitting, the crossbearer goes all the way to the hearse and stands on the sidewalk until the casket is placed in the hearse.

After the Liturgy

- Return the cross to the stand in the back of church.
- Use the snuffer to put out the candles to avoid getting wax on the carpet or anything else.
- Move the baptismal candle back near the baptismal font unless it is during the Easter season when it is traditionally placed in the sanctuary area.
- Purify vessels and put them away if there is no sacristan.