

**Altar Server**

**Booklet**

St. Denis Catholic Church

Fort Fairfield, Maine

## WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Altar servers perform a wonderful ministry in the Church. Thank you for your willingness to serve our parish!

This booklet will describe the responsibilities of altar servers at St. Denis Catholic Church. This booklet will be posted in the sacristy if you'd like to review your responsibilities. There are some important things that *all* servers must remember while serving. In addition, there are 3 *specific* assigned jobs to do: the Book, the Cross Bearer and Server(s). Each of these jobs has different responsibilities.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

You will be scheduled to serve based upon the information that you give us. The schedule is posted in a holder in the sacristy. Your name will be on the outside of the schedule. Please pick up your schedule so that you know when you will be serving and what responsibility you have.

### Prior to Mass (Things to Remember):

1. If you are unable to serve at the Mass when you are scheduled, then it is your responsibility to find a replacement. This is an important responsibility, because it creates a huge hardship for the Priest presiding over the Mass to search for a replacement for you before Mass! Each altar server will have a phone list to refer to if you need to call another server who attends the Mass at the same time that you're scheduled. Please keep your phone list in a handy place.
2. If you are not scheduled to serve and notice that there is not enough altar servers, you can serve. We appreciate when you can help out in a pinch!
3. Always do the job that you are scheduled for, instead of trading responsibilities of the Book, Cross Bearer and Server at the altar. You need to know how to do all of the responsibilities (with the exception of the Cross Bearer, which is usually a responsibility for older altar servers (the cross is very heavy!).
4. Please arrive at the Church at least 15-20 minutes prior Mass. The altar server coordinators check the schedule to make sure that you are serving. If you replace someone, please cross out the person you are replacing, and initial your name next to theirs to show that you replaced them. Also during this time, you will be putting on your robes, crosses, lighting the candles (Cross Bearer), and preparing for Mass.

5. All servers must remember to be very quiet while in the sacristy getting ready for Mass. The sacristy is in the front of the church and when people talk there it can be heard throughout the church. Remember, no horseplay while in the sacristy!
6. Some people are nervous at first—that's o.k.! You will get used to being in front of the congregation! Don't be afraid if you make a mistake. Chances are if you don't react to it, the congregation may not even notice! The congregation does not know entirely what your responsibilities are.

During Mass (Things to Remember):

1. When you are in the Sanctuary, please remember that you must be respectful at all times. You can be seen by the whole congregation. All eyes are upon you, and please do not fool around, talk, whisper or giggle. It is also very important that you never leave the altar unless it is an *emergency*. If you see an altar server not following these rules, it will certainly be discussed with them after Mass.
2. Please participate in all of the Mass. When you are supposed to stand with the congregation, then stand. When you are supposed to sit with the congregation, then sit. Sing, when it is time to sing. There are booklets on the chairs where you are sitting. When it is time to recite prayers, please recite the prayers.
3. During The Lord's Prayer, all servers may join the Priest at the altar and hold hands while reciting the prayer. The servers will remain around the altar until it is time to give the "Sign of Peace". Shake the Priest's hand and wish him peace as well as the other altar servers. The Book and Cross Bearer may return to their seats and wait for the Eucharist. The altar server sets the altar (see your responsibilities listed below).
4. During communion, when the Eucharistic Ministers go on the altar, the altar servers will find a place alongside the Eucharistic Ministers. The altar servers will receive communion with the Eucharistic Ministers and then will kneel when the Ministers leave the altar to give communion to the congregation.

## The Duties of the CROSS BEARER

1. Prior to Mass - The cross bearer shall be the one to light the candles before Mass begins. This is usually done 5-10 minute before Mass. The Cross Bearer must also snuff out the candles with the candle holder, after Mass ends.

The cross bearer must find out prior to Mass if there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> collection during Mass, so that they will know before Mass starts.

Before Mass begins, the cross bearer will bring the crucifix down to the back of the church and wait for Mass to begin. Be very careful when carrying the Crucifix to lower it so as not to hit any openings, doorways, etc.

2. Procession Into The Church - The Cross Bearer is the first person to process down the aisle when Mass begins. When the Entrance Hymn begins, you will start slowly down the aisle. Try to carry the crucifix a little high. The cross bearer is the only altar server that *does not* bow in front of the altar. He/she then walks to the right of the altar and places the Crucifix *very gently* into the holder, making sure that Jesus is facing the congregation. Then you will stand in front of your seat, (the altar server who is doing the book will be next to you on the altar. When the priest sits, you may sit also.
3. After the collection (the cross bearer knows ahead of time whether there is one collection or two), the cross bearer will take the crucifix out of the holder, making sure the crucifix is facing the people, and start walking down the steps to the table where the gifts have been placed. The cross bearer will wait for the family who will be presenting the gifts to stand. Once the family takes the items off the offertory table, the cross bearer turns around and leads them to the front of the church. The Cross Bearer will continue to march up the steps and put the crucifix back into the holder, *very gently*. Make sure that the crucifix is facing the congregation.
4. Procession Out the Church - At the end of Mass, when the Priest kisses the altar, take the crucifix, walk down the aisle, stop at the 3<sup>rd</sup> pew, turn around, and wait for the other servers to come down the aisle. When the priest comes down the aisle, he will bow with the other altar servers. Wait until he bows, he will turn around, then you turn around and walk down the aisle. Make sure you carry the Crucifix a little high, and walk slowly. After you reach the end of the pews, turn to the left and walk back up the side aisle and return the crucifix to its holder on top of the altar. Make sure that the crucifix is always facing the congregation. Snuff out the candles. Hang your robe up and your cross.

### *The duties of THE BOOK (Sacramentary)*

1. Prior to Mass - Take the Book from the sacristy and put it on the seat where you will be sitting during Mass. Walk down the side aisle (or outside and around the church) to the back of the church with the other altar servers and wait for Mass to begin.
2. Procession into the Church - You will be walking right behind the Cross Bearer down the aisle, when Mass begins. When the Opening Song starts, the Cross Bearer will start slowly down the aisle. You will begin walking behind the cross bearer, once they are 5 pews ahead of you. You will walk on the right hand side, and the 1<sup>st</sup> altar server will be walking with you on your left side. Walk down slowly together to the altar. When you reach the top of the set of stairs, bow together in front of the altar.
3. Opening prayer - The priest will welcome the congregation after the opening hymn is finished. When the priest says “Let us Pray...”, that is your cue to pick the Book up, hold the Book facing the congregation, and bring it in front of the Priest. The Priest will open the Book, you may rest the Book against your chest. The Priest will read and then close the Book. When the Book is closed, walk behind the altar and place the Book on the altar, in the middle section. Then go to your seat and sit down.
4. Communion - Once you have received communion, go to your pew and kneel. When the Priest and Eucharistic Ministers leave the altar to give communion to the congregation, and the music starts, you will bring the Book back to the pew with you and place it on top of the kneeler.
5. Closing prayer - after communion, the priest will sit. When the priest sits, you may sit also. The priest will then stand and say “Let us Pray”. That is your cue again to bring the Book to the priest. Hold the book in the same manner as you did at the start of Mass. After the prayer, you will bring the Book to your seat and remain standing.
6. Procession out of the Church - As soon as the closing hymn starts, follow the altar server who is carrying the crucifix. The Cross Bearer will stop at the 3<sup>rd</sup> pew and turn around and wait for the other servers and the priest to come down the steps. When the Priest comes down the steps, at the bottom of the steps, he will bow before the altar, and you will bow at the same time. He will then turn around facing the congregation, then you will turn around and walk down the aisle. Please

walk slowly. After you reach the end of the pews, turn to the left and walk back up the side aisle.

Hang your robe up and your cross.

### **The duties of THE 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SERVER**

1. Prior to Mass - Walk down the side aisle (or outside and around the church) to the back of the church with the other altar servers and wait for Mass to begin.
2. Procession into the Church - If you are three servers, you will be walking down the aisle right behind the Cross Bearer, and with the Book Server when Mass begins. The 1<sup>st</sup> server will be on the left-hand side and the Book Server will be on the right hand side, walking together. The 2<sup>nd</sup> server will proceed *directly behind* the Book server and 1<sup>st</sup> server. When the Opening Song begins, the Cross Bearer will start slowly down the aisle and all other altar servers will follow. Walk down slowly. When you reach the steps of the Sanctuary, the 1<sup>st</sup> server and Book server will bow *together* in front of the altar, the 1<sup>st</sup> server will go to the left of the altar and stand at their seat, and the Book server will go to the right of the altar and stand at their seat. The 2<sup>nd</sup> server will bow when they reach the top of the stairs, and proceed to the left side of the altar, and join the 1<sup>st</sup> server, standing in front of their seat.
3. Preparation of the Altar - During the collection, when the Priest sits, one of the altar servers will bring a corporal and a purificator to the altar. The altar server will lay the corporal on the bottom center of the altar with the red cross nearer to the edge of the altar. The purificator will be placed to the right of the corporal with the red cross towards the people. The other altar server will bring the chalice and paten and place them to the right of the purificator. If you are only one server, you do both.
3. Offertory - When the priest goes down the steps to receive the gifts from the Offertory family, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> servers will then join him. The 1<sup>st</sup> server will be on the left of the Priest and the 2<sup>nd</sup> server will be on the right. When the Offertory family brings up the gifts, they will give them to the Priest, and the Priest will hand them to the servers.

When the priest turns around, then the servers also turn around and proceed up the steps toward the altar. The servers will hand the gifts to the priest and bow. Both servers will turn around *together* and go to the Credence table to get the Water Cruet. The 1<sup>st</sup> server gets the Water Cruet, go back *together* to the altar,

and remain standing at the altar until the Priest gives one of you the stopper and the Water Cruet. You turn around *together*, go to the credence table, and place the stopper and the Water Cruet on the table.

The 1<sup>st</sup> server takes the pitcher filled with water and the basin (this can be heavy), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> server takes the towel and drapes it over their left hand. Then you both walk *together* to the left side of the altar and wait for the Priest to turn to you. He will put out his hands to be washed. The 1<sup>st</sup> altar server will pour water onto the priest's hands with the plate underneath. Just a little bit of water will do. The 2<sup>nd</sup> server will stand while the Priest wipes his hands on the towel. Then you bow, turn around *together* and bring the pitcher, basin and towel back to the credence table. Then you both can sit down until the congregation stands.

4. Elevation - Ringing the bells or striking the chimes when the priest elevates the host and the cup.
5. Preparing for Communion - Once the Priest begins to say the Lord's Prayer and you are at the altar with the Priest, you will offer to each other and to the priest the Sign of Peace and then you both will go back to the credence table. The 1<sup>st</sup> server will get the paten and place them on the left side of the altar. You will need to make at least 2 trips. Walk slowly. Then, go back to your seat. The 2<sup>nd</sup> server will get the cups and bring them on the right side of the altar, bringing only two at a time. Walk slowly then, go back to your seat.
7. Communion - Once you have received communion, go to your pew, kneel and pray. When the Priest and Eucharistic Ministers leave the altar to give communion to the congregation, and the music starts, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> servers will both go up to the altar and get the purificator and corporal and bring them to the credence table. When the Priest sits down you may clear the altar.
8. Closing prayer - The priest will stand and say "Let us Pray". The Book server will bring the Book to the priest, and return it to his/her seat.
9. Procession Out of the Church - As soon as the priest kisses the altar, the Cross Bearer will get the cross and process down the steps to the aisle and stop at the 3<sup>rd</sup> pew. The altar servers will follow him, stop at the 1<sup>st</sup> pew and then all will turn together and face the altar. When the priest comes down the steps, he will turn around bow in front of the altar, and all servers will bow at the same time. He will then turn around, then you will all turn around and walk down the aisle. Make sure you walk slowly. After you reach the end of the pews, turn to the left and walk back up the side aisle.

Hang your robe up and put your cross away.

I hope that you have found this booklet helpful! Please contact me if you have any questions or comments. **Joan Bernard Telephone 476-6721**

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