

Serving at the Altar of God

An Instruction for Children and Youth - Saint Vincent de Paul Parish Religious Education Program

GLOSSARY of TERMS

- A-B -

Advent - when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas; the liturgical color is purple

Alb - a white garment worn by altar servers at Mass; white signifies purity of mind, body, and soul

Altar - where the sacrifice of the Holy Mass occurs

Altar and Rosary Society - a parish ministry which supports the priest by praying for him, maintains the sacred linens, and provide other support to the parish where needed

Altar Bells - a group of metal bells which are rung by an altar server at Mass; usually made of brass; the bells are rung once to give glory to the Holy Spirit at the epiclesis, and rung three times at the consecration of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to give glory to the Holy Trinity

Altar Candle(s) - candles which surround the altar; usually made of beeswax; our candles contain oil; always use the candle snuffer to put out altar candles

Altar Cloth - the cloth which covers the altar

Altar Server - a lay person (child, youth, or adult) who assists the priest on the altar at Mass

Altar Server Guild - name of the altar server ministry at Saint Vincent de Paul; guild is another word for association, group, or club

Altar Server Room - where altar servers' albs and cinctures are kept; where altar servers vest for Mass; located next to the sacristy

Ambo - where lectors read from scripture at Mass, and from where the priest proclaims the Gospel and gives his **homily** at Mass

Announcements - information read by either the lector or pronounced by the priest about parish events or other messages important to the people and parish life

Berchmans, St. John - the patron saint of altar servers

- C -

Candle Snuffer - used to extinguish (put out) the altar candles after Mass

Cantor - someone who leads the people in song during Mass

Cassock - a garment similar to an alb which is usually black and buttons down the front; usually worn by a priest; it can also be worn by altar servers underneath a *surplice*.

Chalice - the sacred vessel used by the priest at the altar which contains the Blood of Christ

Chasuble - the garment worn by the priest at Mass which coincides the liturgical calendar and colors of the church (see *liturgical calendar* and *liturgical colors*)

Ciborium - a sacred vessel which contains either consecrated or unconsecrated hosts for Holy Communion

Cincture - a special rope worn around the waist to signify purity

Collect - Also known as the Opening Prayer which invites everyone in the congregation to pray. (This word is

pronounced with emphasis on the first syllable: KOL-lekt, not kol-LEKT.)

Communicant - a person who receives Holy Communion at Mass

Communion Rite - follows the Eucharistic Prayer and leads the congregation to the holy table of the Eucharist

Concluding Rite - the end of the Mass when the priest gives a final blessing before sending the people out to the world to proclaim the Good News that Jesus loves us all

Congregation - all of God's people together at Mass; the congregation sits in the pews located in the nave of the church

Consecration - the part of the Mass during the Liturgy of the Eucharist when the bread and wine are mysteriously made into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ

Corporal - a sacred linen used on the altar which is placed under the chalice and paten

Credence Table - the table at the altar where the articles used during Mass are placed

Creed - "I believe in one God..." The Creed contains everything we believe about God. We say the Creed at Mass on Sundays to profess in public that we believe everything which God has revealed to us. We usually say the Nicene Creed at Mass; we usually say the Apostles' Creed (a shorter version) when we pray the Holy Rosary. The Creed is also referred to as The Profession of Faith.

Cross Bearer - the altar server who processes in and out of the church holding the processional cross

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Crossing Area- the space between the nave and sanctuary in the church

Cruets - hold the water and wine used for the consecration; used to hold the water used at the lavabo; kept on the credence table

- D-E -

Dalmatic - the garment worn by a deacon at Mass

Deacon - a man who has received the sacrament of Holy Orders, but is not a priest; a *seminarian* is usually ordained as a deacon before being ordained as a priest; a deacon can be a married or a single man; a deacon is not a priest - a deacon cannot consecrate the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but can bless items such as rosaries and medals; a deacon can also administer the Sacrament of Baptism and witness the Sacrament of Marriage

Epiclesis - before the consecration when the Holy Spirit comes to bless and sanctify (make holy) the bread and wine which will become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; the altar server rings the altar bells once

Eucharistic Prayer - this is the prayer said only by the priest during the consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus; there are four different versions of the Eucharistic Prayer; altar servers are to be very focused on the priest and what is happening at the altar during this time of prayer

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EM) - a lay person chosen by the Church who administers Holy Communion at Mass when there are not enough priests or deacons to do so; EMs also bring the Eucharist to the the faithful who are sick in the hospital or who are homebound (do not use the term "Eucharistic Minister"; only the priest can be a "Eucharistic Minister";

lay people cannot be Eucharistic Ministers)

- F-G -

Feast(s) - a special celebration of a saint or holy event to which the Church gives special recognition

Gathering Space (See Narthex)

General Intercessions - the lector (or deacon) reads prayers (or intercessions) on behalf of the congregation asking for God's mercy and providence upon the Church, the world, and themselves. We respond to each intercession, "Lord, hear our prayer." The General Intercessions occur during the Liturgy of the Word, right after we say the Creed.

Gospel - At Mass, a reading is proclaimed by the priest (or sometimes a deacon) from a book of the New Testament which was written by one of the evangelists: St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, or St. John. Everyone stands to listen to the Gospel at Mass, because it contains actual words that Jesus said to his disciples when He was here on earth.

- H-I-J-K -

Homily - when the priest gives a commentary on the scriptures read at Mass and instructs the people accordingly

Host - the bread used at Mass which is consecrated by the priest into the Holy Eucharist

Hymn - sacred music played and sung during the Mass; we do not sing "songs" at Mass, we sing sacred hymns which are prayers set to music pleasing to God

Hymnal - the books found in the pews which contain the readings, prayers, responses, and music used at Mass. Some parishes call hymnals "worship aids."

Introductory Rites - the beginning of the Mass; the Sign of the Cross, the Greeting, the Penitential Act ("I confess to almighty God..."), the Kyrie Eleison (Lord, have mercy...), the Gloria, and then the Collect.

Kneeler(s) - located in the pews; used by the people to kneel during the appointed times during the Mass

- L -

Lavabo - when the priest washes his hands before consecrating the bread and wine; the altar servers assist the priest by pouring water over his hands and providing him with a manuterge to dry them

Lay Person/People - the faithful who are not priests or consecrated religious who belong to a religious order

Lector(s) - proclaims the first and second readings from scripture at Mass; also makes announcements before and after Mass

Lent - season of the Church when we prepare for Easter; purple is the liturgical color

Liturgical Calendar - the calendar of the Church which lists the seasons (Advent, Lent, Ordinary Time), solemnities, and feasts which we celebrate

Liturgical Colors - *Green* is used during Ordinary Time when we hear from the scriptures at Mass of Jesus' ministry on earth - green signifies hope; *Purple* is used to signify preparation and repentance during Advent and Lent when we prepare for Christmas or

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Easter; *White* - used to celebrate Christmas, Easter, and other solemnities and feasts - white signifies celebration and purity of heart; *Red* is used at Pentecost and on feasts of the holy martyrs; red signifies the flames of love and wisdom of the Holy Spirit; it also signifies the blood shed by the holy martyrs

Liturgical Minister(s) - lay people who serve at Mass, such as altar servers, ushers, lectors, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMs)

Liturgy of the Eucharist is the part of the Mass which includes the Offertory, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the Communion Rite. This is the most important part of the Mass as Jesus becomes truly present to us in the Eucharist - Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

Liturgy of the Word begins after the Introductory Rites; we listen to the Word of God (from the Holy Bible) in the 1st Reading, Psalm, 2nd Reading, and the proclamation of the Holy Gospel.

- M-N -

Manuterge(s) - the linen which the priest uses to dry his hands at the lavabo

Martyr(s) - holy men and women who gave their lives out of love for Jesus

Ministry - service to the Church and its people

Missal - see **Roman Missal**

Narthex - also known as the gathering space; where the faithful enter and then go into the nave of the church to worship

Nave - space where the faithful worship God within the church

New Testament - The second half of the Holy Bible which contains writings of eyewitnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus here on earth. The New Testament includes the four Gospels written by Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Acts of the Apostles, as well as other writings of Jesus's disciples. The last Book of the New Testament is the Book of Revelation.

O-P-Q-R -

Old Testament - The first half of the Holy Bible which contains scripture written before the birth of Jesus. At Sunday Mass, the first reading during the *Liturgy of the Word* is usually taken from the Old Testament. The first book of the Old Testament is Genesis.

Opening Prayers - Mass begins with the Sign of the Cross, followed by the Kyrie (Lord Have Mercy),

Ordinary Time - when we hear from the scriptures at Mass of Jesus's ministry here on earth; the liturgical color is green; green signifies hope

Organist - the person who plays the organ at Mass

Pall - a stiff, square-shaped board placed over the chalice

Paten - a sacred vessel used to hold the large host to be consecrated by the priest at Mass; the altar server uses a paten with a handle on it to prevent the Body of Christ from falling to the floor when the Eucharist is distributed to the faithful

Pew(s) - where the faithful are seated during Mass in the nave of the church

Prayer of the Faithful (Universal Prayer) - see **General Intercessions**

Prayers of Dismissal are prayed by the priest at the end of Mass; the priest can elect to say one of the following: "Go forth, the Mass is ended."; "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord."; "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."; or "Go in peace." (see *Concluding Rites*)

Presider's Chair - the chair where the celebrant of the Mass is seated (a priest or bishop)

Processional (Procession) - led by the cross bearer into the church, followed by the candle bearers, then the lector, then the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, and then the priest; the procession is in order of importance of ministry

Processional Cross - a large crucifix set upon a pole which is used in processions such as at Mass and other sacred celebrations (see also *Cross Bearer*)

Purification - the act of making something pure or clean; when the priest cleans the sacred vessels, he is performing the purification of those vessels, making those vessels clean again

Purificator(s) - sacred linens used to wipe and clean the sacred vessels used during Mass

Recessional - opposite of processional; when the altar servers, lector, EM, and priest leave the church at the end of Mass

Recessional Hymn - a sacred hymn sung by the congregation and/or choir as the priest, altar servers, and liturgical ministers process out of the church at the end of Mass

Religious Order - a group of men and women who dedicate their lives to Jesus and His Church in a special way (for example the Franciscans, Carmelites, Dominicans, etc.)

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Roman Missal - a large book, usually with a red cover, illustrations, and ribbons in the liturgical colors which contains the prayers, instructions, and other information for the celebration of Mass; this book is used by the priest throughout the Mass and may be placed on the holy altar

- S -

Sacrarium - the sink located in the sacristy in which the sacred vessels and sacred linens are washed and cleaned

Sacred Linens - special cloths used during the Mass, such as the corporal, purificators, and manuterges

Sacred Silence - a brief amount of time when the priest and the people sit or stand quietly in prayer

Sacred Vessels - items used at Mass such as the chalice, paten, ciborium, and cruets

Sacristan - a person who is responsible for maintaining order in the sacristy, ordering supplies for use at Mass, preparing the altar for Mass, and for purifying the sacred vessels after use at Mass

Sacristy - room where the priest's vestments are kept and where he vests for Mass; where the sacred vessels and other special items used at Mass are kept

Sanctuary - area within the church which contains the altar, ambo, tabernacle, sanctuary lamp, presider's chair, and credence table; the holiest area within the church building

Sanctuary Candle - a special candle near the tabernacle which, when lit, signifies that Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle in the form of consecrated hosts

Seminarian - a man studying for the priesthood

Sign of Peace - the priest will call on the congregation to show each other a gesture of peace and community, usually a handshake; altar servers may acknowledge each other very briefly, but are to immediately return their focus to the priest and altar

Snuffer (see Candle Snuffer)

Solemnity(ies) - special celebrations of events of the Church, saints, and martyrs; every Sunday is a solemnity; other solemnities are Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost

Stole - a long garment about 4 inches wide which the priest wears around his neck under his chasuble; usually the same color as his chasuble; when hearing confession, the priest wears a purple stole (purple signifies repentance and sorrow)

Surplice - a loose-fitting white garment worn over a cassock; the color white signifies purity

- T -

Tabernacle - the sacred vessel located on the altar which contains the True Presence of Jesus in the form of hosts which were consecrated at Mass; only the priest and EMS should access the tabernacle; kneel each time it is opened and you are present; you may stand only after it is closed again

- U-V-W -

Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) - See **General Intercessions**

Usher(s) - men and women who serve the faithful who come to church by welcoming them, seating them, passing

the offertory baskets, and distributing the bulletin

Vest, Vests, or Vesting - used as a verb; vesting describes when the priest, deacon, and other liturgical ministers put on their liturgical garments

- X-Y-Z -