

**ST. ELIZABETH SETON CHURCH  
ALTAR SERVER GUIDELINES  
UPDATED-JANUARY 2012**

**NOTE: THERE WILL BE 3 ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULED FOR EACH MASS.**

**MASS PREPARATION**

1. Arrive 15 minutes before Mass starts.
2. The altar candles are lit 5 minutes before Mass starts.

**ENTRANCE PROCESSION**

1. After the Lector finish's the announcements and starts to walk off the altar the 3 altar servers need to line up.
  - a. **THE TALLEST OR MOST EXPERIENCED ALTAR SERVER WILL BE THE CROSS BEARER.** He/she will stand in the middle of the aisle at the third pew with the cross.
  - b. **THE 2 OTHER ALTAR SERVERS WILL BE THE CANDLE BEARERS.** They will stand facing each other with their backs touching the first pew. Candle bearer #1 will be on the left side and the Candle bearer #2 will be on the right side as you face the altar.
2. The Lector will make the introductory announcement from the podium and return to the back of the church. After the bell is rung, the music begins. When the singing begins the Cross Bearer starts the procession, at which time the 2 candle bearers will turn to the altar and follow the cross bearer leaving a space of at least 3 pews between the cross bearer and candle bearers. **PLEASE DO NOT RUN – WALK SLOWLY!**
3. The cross bearer turns left when he/she reaches the altar steps, and walks to the front pew on the left and turns to face the altar.
4. The candle bearers follow the cross bearer to the front altar steps. Candle bearer #1 joins the cross bearer and stands to the right of the cross bearer. Candle bearer #2 turns right and walks to the front pew on the right, then turns to face the altar.
5. Father and Deacon will process to the altar and genuflect. **THE ALTAR SERVERS DO NOT BOW (SINCE THEY ARE CARRYING THE CROSS & CANDLES).** After Father and Deacon go around the altar they will kiss the altar, then go up to their chairs and face the people. Then the cross bearer will proceed to place the cross on the stand to the left of the altar, then go and stand in front of the bench closest to the lectern.

6. The candle bearers will place the candles on the candle stands and then join the cross bearer on the bench. (Candle bearer #1 will stand next to the cross bearer and candle bearer #2 will stand next to candle bearer #1 at the end of the bench closest to the window.

### **INTRODUCTORY RITE & THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

1. Father will greet the people; introduce the theme of the mass. The priest/deacon will lead the penitential rite: "Lord, have mercy," Then "Glory to God" is recited or sung. Toward the end of "Glory to God", Father or Deacon will signal the cross bearer for the book (New Roman Missal). The cross bearer goes to get the (New Roman Missal) Book (with both hands on the bottom, elbows resting at their sides and the top of the Book resting on his/her chest) and stands in front of or to the side of Father. Be sure to keep your fingers straight so Father can turn the pages. After he is finished praying the Opening Prayer, Father will close the Book. The cross bearer will transfer the Book to the side table and return to his/her seat. Then the Liturgy of the Word takes place. Stand for the Alleluia and Gospel proclamation. The Priest or Deacon reading the Gospel will take the Book of the Gospels and put it on the Lectern. After he reads the Gospel, he will bring the Book of the Gospels to the side table. Everyone sits for the homily, and stands for the Profession of Faith and the Prayer of the Faithful.
2. Everyone is seated, and you sit also.

### **PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS & LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

1. After the Prayer of the Faithful and everyone is seated, Father stands or the Deacon comes back and waits in front of his chair, once the Preparation of the Gifts song starts the cross bearer gets the pillow and the book together from the side table and brings them to the left side of the altar. Candle bearer #1 goes to the side table to get Father's Chalice, Pall, Corporal/s and Purificator/s and places them on the right side of the altar, then goes and sits down. Candle bearer #2 will get the Communion Cups and Purificators from the Side Table and place them on the right side of the altar.
2. When the ushers line up the offertory-gift bearers in the back of the church, Father and the Deacon stand up and the three altar servers stand up also. Then the Deacon (if there is one) will walk around the lectern to the center in front of the altar and the three altar servers follow the deacon. The Cross bearer will go **behind** Father and stand on his left. The other two will stand on the right side of the Priest/Deacon. As Father is presented with the Paten, Wine and Ciborium/a,

he will pass them on to the deacon who in turn will pass them to the altar servers. All turn around together and face the altar. Father and the Deacon will take one step back, and the servers will carry the gifts to the altar (#2 candle bearer will lead) and leave them on the side of the altar. The candle bearers will leave their vessels on the side of the altar and go over to the (Credence) Table. The cross bearer will sit down.

3. Candle bearer #1 he/she will pick up the Water Cruet and the Dish from the (Side) Table and lead the way to the altar (standing close to the altar). **DO NOT PLACE WATER CRUET OR DISH ON THE ALTAR!** Candle bearer #2 will get the towel from the Table, **unfold it**, and follow candle bearer #1 to the altar, standing to the left of candle bearer #1. After Father washes and dries his hands, the altar servers return the Water Cruet, Dish and FOLDED Towel to the table. Candle bearer #2 leads the way. \*\* At this time, if Father has not given the Flagon to Candle bearer #2 or the Deacon has not returned it to the credence table, the Cross bearer will get the empty FLAGON from the altar and bring it to the Side Table.
4. All three servers remain seated until the prayer: "Pray, my sisters and brothers."  
\*\* When everyone stands, they also stand and move forward to the step by the Altar. All kneel (on the step) when the congregation kneels. The cross bearer rings the bells (3 short times) both times as instructed while kneeling.

### **COMMUNION RITE**

1. At the Our Father, all three altar servers stand up and recite the Our Father with the congregation.
2. At the "Sign of Peace", the altar servers are to exchange Peace amongst themselves. When Father shakes their hands for peace, they respond, "And also with you, Father." **PLEASE STAY WHERE YOU ARE, DO NOT GO ANYWHERE!**
3. The Eucharistic Ministers will stand on the choir side of the altar to receive the Eucharist. After you have received communion then, together, you turn around and go back to your seats.
4. \*\* After the distribution of communion and **the door to the tabernacle is closed**, all three altar servers will line up one behind the other, closer to the lectern, with the cross bearer first, to return everything back to the (Side) Table. Keep returning to the altar until Father has handed everything to servers and altar is clear.

### CONCLUDING RITE

1. When Father stands, the altar servers also stand. The cross bearer gets the (New Roman Missal) Book and holds it in front of or to the side of Father (in the instructed manner). When Father closes the Book, the cross bearer returns it to the Side Table and stands along with the other servers.
2. After the first verse of the hymn, Father or the Deacon will give the cue to the cross bearer who will get the cross and start walking around to the third pew from the front. The other two altar servers get the candles and follow to the first pews in front. All face the altar.
3. Father and the Deacon will reverence the altar and come around to the front of the altar.
4. When Father and the Deacon genuflect and turn around that is the cue for the cross bearer and candle bearers to turn and walk slowly down the aisle. **THE CROSS BEARER MUST REMEMBER TO LOWER THE CROSS BEFORE GOING THROUGH THE DOORS.** The candle bearers will place the candles back on the stands and use the snuffer to put out the candles.
5. All altar servers distribute the lollypops.
6. Please hang your robes back on the appropriate hangers and don't forget your jackets in the closet.

**THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU!**

**Fr. Joseph Prince**

**Altar Server Terms and Definitions:**

**Alb** – A long white garment worn during liturgical services which extends from the neck to ankles. They are worn by servers and clergy.

**Ambo** – The platform, lectern or pulpit from which the readings and homily are given.

**Ambry** – The location of the blessed oils: oil of catechumens (OS), oil of the sick (OI), and sacred chrism (SC) are kept under lock and key.

**Censer and Boat** – The containers which hold the charcoal and incense during solemn liturgies.

**Chalice or Communion Cups** – Containers of precious metal which hold the wine to become the Blood of Jesus after the consecration.

**Ciborium** – A large container of precious metal with a cover which holds the hosts to become the Body of Jesus after the consecration.

**Cincture** – Rope used as a belt around the waist, worn outside the alb.

**Corporal** – A white linen cloth with an embroidered design, placed on top of the altar cloth to keep any of the sacred particles from being lost.

**Credence Table** – The table in the sanctuary where the cruets, chalices, and other items needed for mass are placed for use in the Liturgy.

**Cruets** – Glass or crystal containers which hold the altar wine and water.

**Flagon** – Container of altar wine used in the Offertory Procession.

**Genuflection** – Whenever passing directly in front of the tabernacle, one should genuflect on one knee to acknowledge the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament.

**Lavabo** – Metal Bowl used in the washing of the priest's hands before the consecration. A towel and cruet with water are close by.

**Lectionary** – The Official Book of Readings used for all Liturgical celebrations.

**Liturgical Colors** – White, green, red and violet.

**Paten** – A small precious metal dish that holds the host. The paten is usually kept near the chalice.

**Processional Cross** – The Large brass cross that leads the processional and recessional during the Liturgy.

**Purificator** – A Linen cloth used by the priest, deacon, and/or Eucharistic Minister to cleanse the chalice after the partaking of the Blood of Christ.

**Pall** – A square piece of cardboard or plastic which is covered by linen and used to cover the chalice.

**Roman Missal** – The Official Book containing all prayers of the Mass for all liturgical celebrations.

**Tabernacle** – The location where the Blessed Sacrament is kept under lock and key. A sanctuary candle is always burning nearby to signify the Real Presence of Jesus.

**Vestry** – The location where the priests and deacons vest for Mass. Altar server albs and cinctures are located in the vestry as well as all the sacred vessels.