



## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHURCH

SERVED BY THE AUGUSTINIANS + 185 ST. THOMAS DRIVE OJAI, CALIFORNIA 93023 + (805) 646-4338

### -- ALTAR SERVERS INFORMATION SHEET --

The ministry of serving at the altar of God is an important service to our parish family. So thank you so much for agreeing to serve in this very important and special ministry. We wanted to also point out that is YOUR ministry, and because of this, it should be a very enjoyable one. However, as a server you have a special role in the Mass, and people will be looking for you to act respectfully and responsibly. Some general guidelines for your ministry follows:

-Always check your schedule so that you don't miss an assignment and you are on time. If you can't make a serving assignment, **it is up to you to get a replacement.**

-When in the church, act respectfully and quietly, and please don't walk around in the sanctuary unless you are wearing the cassock and surplice.

-Remember that you are an example for everyone in the church when you are serving; so, please make sure you sing and make all responses with the congregation.

#### **BEFORE MASS Checklist:**

Get vested in cassock and surplice.

If not already done, fill both cruets (one with wine and one with water), rinse funnel after using, and place funnel on drying peg.

Put the following on the **GIFTS TABLE** (table in the middle of the church):

- cruet or flagon of wine
- ciborium of hosts (that the priest, deacon, or sacristan will fill)

Make sure the following are on the **CREDENCE TABLE** (next to the sacristy door):

- cruet of water
- empty bowl for catching water
- towel
- any additional ciboriums and chalices

Ten minutes before Mass, light the candles (2- ambo & 4- altar)

#### **SERVING the Mass:**

Entrance Procession - walk at a slightly slower than normal speed when processing in. The first server should be carrying the cross, the other servers should follow with their arms folded.



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At the front of the altar, the servers should bow to the altar. The altar server carrying the cross puts the cross on its stand in the sacristy and then goes to the bench. The other servers will go directly to the bench after bowing to the altar.

Opening Prayer - When the priest says "Let us pray or Oremus", the server nearest to the book will take the book and move in front of the priest. **Please hold the book so that the priest can read it comfortably.**

Children's Dismissal - If you are serving a Mass where the children are dismissed for their own Liturgy of the Word, when the Priest dismisses the children, the cross bearer will take the cross from its stand in the Sacristy and lead the children to the children's room after they receive Father's blessing. After the cross bearer leads the children, they will exit through another door and use the back way to go to the sacristy and then to the bench.

The Offertory (the Collection) - The Altar Servers should take this time to prepare the altar for the liturgy of the Eucharist. Bring the Missal, the chalices with purificators, and the ciboriums to the altar. **As you place these things in the altar, remember to do it reverently and never rush.** You are entering a very sacred space, and you are touching very sacred objects. Please treat them with the reverence that they deserve. After you place each item on the altar, **bow to the altar** before you go down the steps. Return to the bench, and be ready to help Father receive the gifts after the Offertory.

After the collection has been taken, the Cross bearer gets the cross again and goes to the middle of the church to lead the offertory procession to the sanctuary.

The other servers go down with the priest to accept the gifts being brought up. The priest gives the servers the cruet of wine and the offertory basket. The offertory basket should be taken to the foot of the altar. The cruet of wine should be taken to the credence table. At this time take the top of the cruet of wine.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist - Each server should take one of the cruets to altar. **Make sure that the lids are taken off and when you hold it that the handles are facing the priest, so that it will easier for them to pick it up from you.**

A server should then take a bowl and the water cruet, while the other server takes the towel to the altar. The server with the water cruet will then wash Father's hands by pouring water over them, using the bowl to catch the water. After this, the server carrying the towel should then offer the towel to the priest.

When this is finished, both servers should bow to Father and go to the bottom of the steps.



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The Consecration - The consecration is the holiest part of the Mass. This is when bread and wine change into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Father lifts up the consecrated Host for the people to adore, **shortly ring the bell ONCE**, and let it gradually finish ringing before you place it on the floor. When Father lifts up the chalice for everyone to adore, **shortly ring the bell ONCE**, and let it gradually finish ringing before you place it on the floor.

During the Our Father, remain standing on the bottom of the steps. During the Rite of Peace, extend a sign of peace to Father by climbing up the steps.

After the Sign of peace, the cross bearer will then get the cross from the Sacristy and go to the front of the Altar. The other servers should then make their way to the front of the Altar. When all altar servers have made their way to the front of the Altar, all of them will bow, and process towards the entrance of the church to lead the Communion procession.

The Communion Procession - When about half the Eucharistic Ministers have received communion,, begin the procession towards the altar. This procession should be slow. Never rush this procession, even when you see that the Priest and the Eucharistic Ministers are already at their stations. In the event that the procession arrives at the Sanctuary before the Eucharistic Ministers, process all the way up the aisle and wait with the people. **Do not wait half way or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way.**

Communion - After the communion procession, take the book from the altar and place it back on the bench. Place water cruet on the altar so that the Priest can purify the vessels. Remain standing in front of the bench until everyone has received communion. Communion will be given to the altar servers after everyone has received.

Closing Prayer - The server with the book is to hold the book for the priest when he asks the people to stand for the closing prayer.

Dismissal - After the closing prayer, the server who carried the cross goes into the sacristy and gets the cross. They wait at the door until the final blessing. After the final blessing and dismissal, servers go to the front of the altar with the priest in the same line up at the beginning. The priest and the servers bow, then all proceed out at slightly less than a normal walking pace.

### AFTER MASS Checklist:

Blow out candles.

Bring in any leftover chalices, patens, and ciboriums from the credence table and place on the counter in the sacristy.

Then you may take off your cassock and surplice. Please hang them up neatly.

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS



# ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHURCH

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**Roman Missal** - The very large book which contains the prayers of the Celebrant.

**Celebrant** - The priest who is presiding at the Mass.

**Lectionary** - The large book which contains the readings from Sacred Scripture.

**Book of the Gospels** - A long but thinner book that is usually processed in by the deacon. It contains the Gospel readings for the Mass.

**Credence Table** - the table in the sanctuary used to hold the cruets of wine and water, the chalice, the ciborium, and else needed to celebrate the Mass.

**Altar**- specially consecrated as the Table of the Lord. Because it is a sacred symbol of Christ Himself, it should be treated with special reverence. Therefore, nothing should be placed on the Altar unless it has some necessary connection with the Mass.

**Ambo** - The special elevated podium from where Sacred Scripture is read from.

**Gifts Table** - The table in the middle of the church used to hold the gifts of bread and wine for Mass.

**Vestibule** - The Entrance of the Church

**Nave** - The main body of the church where the people sit.

**Sanctuary** - The front part of the church, where the celebrants of the Mass and the servers sit.

**Tabernacle** - Place in the church where the Eucharist is reserved. It is towards this place that the faithful genuflect to.

**Chalice** - The gold or silver cups used to hold the Precious Blood.

**Paten** - The round small plate of gold or silver used to hold the Body of Christ.

**Ciborium** - The larger bowl-like vessels that hold the Body of Christ.

**Purificator** - The "napkin" which is used to wipe the chalice and the sacred vessels after they have been purified.

**Corporal** - The large square linen which unfolded on the center of the Altar. Used to catch any particles from the consecrated Hosts.

**Cassock** - Red vestment that Altar Servers wear under the Surplice.

**Alb** - White vestment that Priest and Deacons wear during Liturgies. Symbolic of the white baptismal garment.



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**Stole** - A narrow band of cloth used to symbolize the office of the clergy. Used by the clergy when officiating during Sacraments and Liturgies.

**Chasuble** - Wide sleeve-less vestment that Priests and Bishops use during Mass.

**Surplice** - The white vestment that Altar Servers wear over the Cassock.

**Sacristy** - The place where Priests and other celebrants vest for Mass.

**Sacrarium** - Special sink that empties down to the Earth, rather than to the sewage system. Used in the purification of Holy Vessels and the Altar linens.