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# ALTAR SERVER'S MANUAL

2018 (new changes)





# Sacred Heart

## Server Manual

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## Welcome!

You are now a member of a very special group of young people in our parish who have answered God's call to ministry. As a Sacred Heart Altar Server, you are one of the liturgical ministers of our parish. Liturgical ministers have special tasks to perform during liturgies, especially during the celebration of the Eucharist (the Mass).

**The Altar Server is very important in helping God's people worship in the best possible way. You help the priest and other ministers focus on their work by simplifying their motions and reducing distractions. You help the entire community to celebrate Eucharist by your humble service and prayer.**

## *Prayer Before Mass*

In a moment, I will approach the altar of God  
to God who gives joy to my youth,  
to take up this holy service,  
wanting to serve Him well.

I ask you, Lord Jesus,  
for the grace to focus my thoughts on You,  
to draw the attention of my eyes to Your altar  
and to devote my heart only to you. Amen.

## *Prayer After Mass*

God, whose goodness has called me  
to Your service, grant that,  
having been sanctified  
by participating in Your sacred mysteries,  
I may go about this day  
and throughout my whole life  
on the way of salvation,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Introduction

Serving is not for everyone. It is a call from God to a special ministry in the Church. As a Server, you are a Liturgical Minister with an important role during the Mass or during other liturgical services, such as Stations of the Cross or Benediction. It is your privilege to assist the priest at the Altar. You are a part of the congregation and a minister in the sanctuary. This means that you should behave appropriately and respectfully while serving.

## Posture

Posture is how you are using and positioning the parts of your body at a particular time. A server has to carry out a number of different actions at Mass, and so there are a number of different postures.

## Walking

Always walk with your back straight and your head held high. When you process in and out of Mass, stay centered in the aisle and keep your eyes straight ahead. Walk slow and steady.

## Bowing

When you bow to someone or something during the Mass, it should be a smooth forward inclining of your head and shoulders. When you bow to the Altar (which symbolizes Jesus), bow deeply at the waist and bring yourself slowly to your full height. When you bow to the Priest, bow your head slowly and gracefully. Never walk and bow at the same time: stop before bowing. Note: Any time you are holding or carrying anything (a Book, the Processional Cross or a Candle) you do not genuflect, rather bow (only a bow of the head).

## Genuflecting

When you genuflect, keep your hands in front of your chest while you go down on your **right knee**. Keep your body straight. Be sure that your cassock (alb) is not going to trip you on the way down or up.

## Kneeling

When you kneel, you should keep a straight posture.

## Sitting

Sit down on your chair carefully and gracefully. **Once you are seated, sit tall and don't slouch. Place your hands on your lap or flat on your thighs in a relaxed manner.** Feet should be flat on the floor.

## Hands

Unless you are sitting down or carrying something (like a candle); your hands should be kept joined in front of your chest; palm to palm, fingers pointing upward, with your thumbs interlocked. Keep your hands high up on your chest. If you are carrying something in one hand, hold the other hand flat on your chest.

## Sign of the Cross

The Sign of the Cross done at the beginning of Mass and at the final blessing is made by the right hand tracing a cross from the top of your forehead to just below the breast bone then from the left shoulder to the right shoulder. This symbolizes our belief in the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## Small Sign of the Three Crosses

When the announcement of the Gospel has been made, use your thumb and trace a small sign of the cross first on your forehead, next on your lips, then over your heart. This symbolizes the Word of God being made present in your mind, on your lips, and in your heart.

## Eyes

During Mass always look toward the place where the action is: the Presider's Chair, the Ambo, or the Altar. When the scriptures are being proclaimed, you should have your body turned looking at the Lector/Deacon/Priest at the Ambo. When you are talking to someone, you expect that person to look at you – the same is true at Mass. Never look at the people in the congregation, rather look just above their heads. If there is a Master of Ceremonies (MC), keep an eye on him. He might want you to do some special task at any time. (Note: generally MC's are only on hand at special Masses such as Confirmation or Masses when the Bishop is present).

## Attire

Be mindful in how you dress when you are going to serve. Make sure that your shoes and clothing are clean and appropriate for Mass. Even though your clothes are hidden by the cassock (alb), it still matters. **Do not wear shorts.** We have geothermal heating and cooling in the Church to keep you comfortable. Avoid low-riding socks or no socks, both of which look awkward when you are wearing a cassock (alb). **Dress shoes** look the best. If you must wear tennis shoes, they must be clean, no flashing lights or distracting colors (neon green, bright red, etc). **Please, no flip-flops or spike heels.**

## Mistakes

When you make a mistake (*and we **all** do*) never get flustered. Everyone makes an occasional mistake – Priests, Deacons, Lectors, and Altar servers. However, to keep the sacred liturgy flowing smoothly, it is often best to continue along as though whatever happened was deliberate. If you get flustered or quickly reverse direction, this will call attention to the mistake. Smoothly and quietly take the next opportunity to set things right (sometimes it is even best to let the Priest or Deacon take care of the chore you forgot). Get into the habit of keeping an eye on the action at the altar and the priest. Then you will see the Priest or Deacon trying to get your attention to take care of something you may have forgotten or signaling you for an unexpected special task.

**Before Mass**

- Be sure that your shoes and clothing are clean and appropriate for serving Mass.
- Arrive at LEAST **15 min. before Mass** to the Vesting Room.
- Dress: Cassock and Surplice. Use the mirror to be sure that your cassock and surplice are long enough (Cassock should touch your shoe but not touch the ground)
- Light the candles at the main Altar.
- Pray with the Priest the Prayer before Mass
- Two Servers get the processional candles and 1 server gets the cross and stand by the baptism font. This is to be done about 5 minutes before Mass.
- If there are only 2 servers serving Mass, the Cross must be in the procession, so the other server will carry nothing and walk behind the cross.

**The Beginning of Mass**

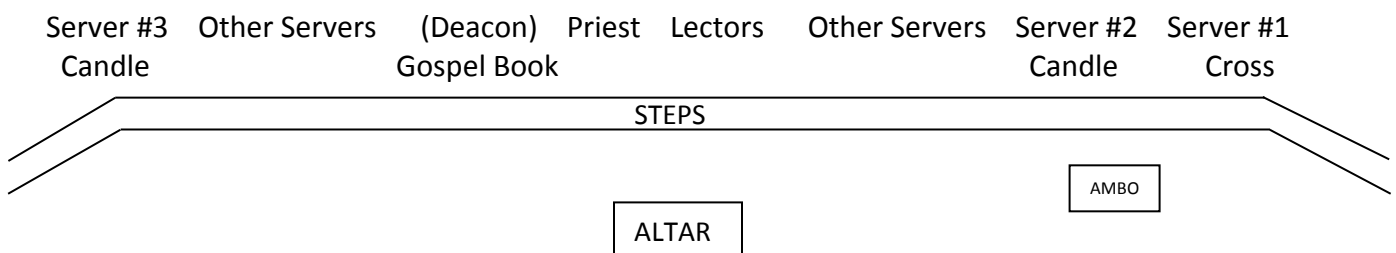
Just before Mass is to begin, the Altar Servers should wait quietly and prayerfully at the rear of the Nave, just inside of the inner doors. They should line themselves up in the correct order to be ready for the procession.

**Processional Entrance**

- The Cross Bearer goes in the middle with the Candle Bearers shoulder to shoulder:

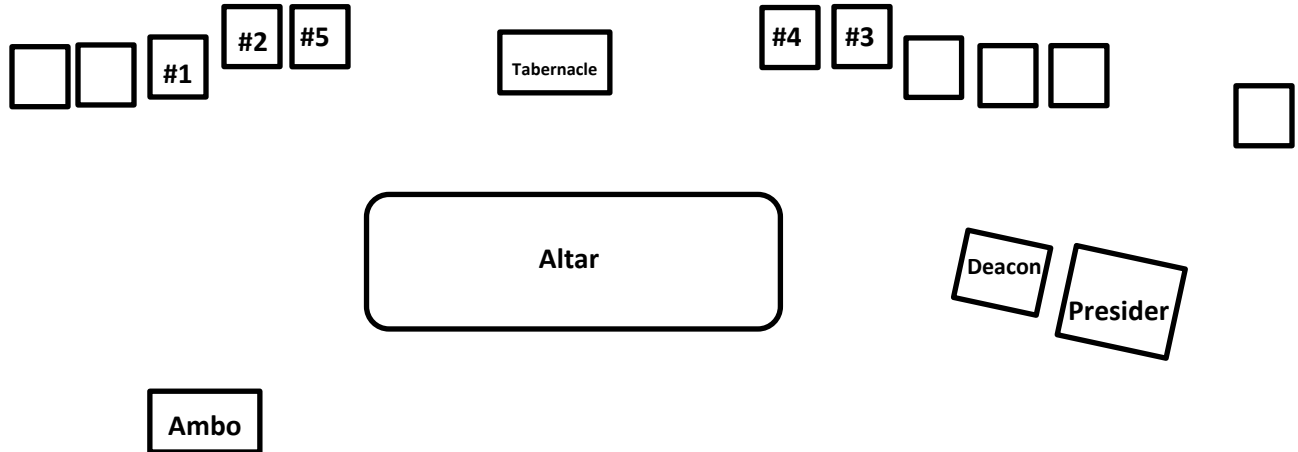
Candle A #2    Cross Bearer #1    Candle B #3  
 (1 ½ pews apart)  
 Extra Servers (*if necessary*)  
 Lectors  
 Deacon - Priest

- The Cross Bearer (server #1) goes to the far left of the bottom of the steps. When the Candle Bearers come to the steps, Server #3 goes to the far right leaving sufficient space for other servers, Lectors, Priest (and Deacon), then turns to face the Altar. Server #2 goes to the left on the left side of the Cross Bearer:



- All those carrying something should bow their heads slightly when the priest genuflects. The servers not holding anything are to genuflect with the priest.
- The priest goes up the steps.

- The Cross Bearer goes up the steps to place the Cross in the stand, with the Cross facing the people, then goes to his/her chair.
- The Candle Bearers go up the steps and then up to the altar to place the candles on the stands. All servers go to their chairs.



### Greeting and Sign of the Cross

#### Penitential Act

- (Penitential prayer (ex: "I confess...") followed by Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy...)

#### The Gloria (In Excelsis)

#### The Collect/Opening Prayer

During the Mass when standing, turn slightly toward the Altar. The Book Bearer (#3)(or if it's more server #4) brings the Roman Missal (book) to the priest (when these words are heard: "**Let us pray**") by holding it in both arms right side up so that the priest can open and read it. Stand in front of the priest, and always let the priest close the book. At the end of the Collect/Opening Prayer, the people and all Altar Servers respond "Amen." When the priest closes the book, return to your chair with the book.

#### The Liturgy of the Word

The focus of the action now shifts to the Ambo. The Altar Servers' attention shifts with the action. Look at the Lector, if you are opposite the Ambo but if you are on the same side, turn your head slightly toward the Ambo and be attentive to the reading.

#### First Reading

**Responsorial Psalm** – please respond or sing along

#### Second Reading

#### Gospel Acclamation

**The Gospel Proclamation** – please respond or sing along

- Turn your body and face the priest at the Ambo while the Gospel is proclaimed.
- Servers #2 and #3 will get the candles by the altar and wait for the priest (or deacon) to take the Gospel Book, turn to the people, wait for a moment and then follow to the Ambo.
- After the Gospel, the Servers will put back the candles in front of the Altar.

#### The Homily

**The Profession of Faith** – pray aloud with the congregation



## The Universal Prayer/Prayer of the Faithful

- At the conclusion of the Prayer of the Faithful, the congregation is seated, and the Altar Servers prepare for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

## Offertory and Preparation of the Gifts

1. At the end of Prayer of the Faithful, Server #3 (or #4) brings the book and stand to the Altar and returns to his/her seat. If there are only 2 Servers, Server #3 needs to assist Server #1 after taking the book to the Altar.
2. Server #1 (or #5) goes to credence table and brings the tray with the large chalice, extra cups, spoon, and purificators to the altar ***(Wait until the priest or deacon takes them from you.)***
3. When the priest goes down the steps to receive the gifts, Server #2 and Server #3 go with him (If its more server #6 goes down as well) They stand slightly behind him. They receive the gifts from him and return to the Altar.
4. If it's just 2 servers, the Server with the ciborium gives it to the priest and goes to the credence table for the cruet of water. He/she brings it to the Altar.
5. Once the priest or deacon has poured the water (with the spoon) and wine from the flagon/cruet, Servers #1 and #2 return to the credence table.
6. If it's more servers, then server with the ciborium goes on one side of the altar and server with the flagon/cruet goes on the other side when another server brings the cruet of water.
7. Server 1 holds the lavabo bowl and cruet of water. Server 2 holds the finger towel.
8. Both Servers return to the side of the Altar to wash the priest's hands. When that is finished, they return the bowl and cruet to the credence table and return to their seats.

## Prayer over the Offerings/Preface

### Eucharistic Prayer (Consecration)

- At the end of the "Holy, Holy, Holy ..." the Altar Servers kneel in unison on the steps.
- Eyes (and minds) are focused on the action at the Altar.
- The bell ringer (Server #2 or another) must be ready to **softly** ring the bells when the priest puts his hands over the gifts and asks the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.
- The bell ringer (Server #2 or another) again rings the bells three times when the priest raises the Body of Christ and then again when the priest raises the cup with the Blood of Christ.
- The Altar Servers remain kneeling until the completion of the Great Amen. Then stand for the "Our Father..."

### Sign of Peace

The Altar Servers may exchange the Sign of Peace with servers next to them. The presider and/or deacon may come to you and offer a sign of peace. Remain standing as the "Lamb of God" is sung/recited until The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion come up to the Altar.

### Communion

The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will come up to the Altar and stand in a partial semicircle – servers will kneel on the steps. When the priest finishes "Lamb of God who takes..." the Eucharistic Ministers and servers (servers will join them after priest received communion) receive Holy Communion and then kneel.

### After Communion

As soon as the priest gets back to the Altar, he will put Jesus to the Tabernacle and then want the water to rinse the Chalice.

- Server #1 (or #6) will bring the tray with the water cruet to the priest to purify the chalices and ciborium.
- Server #3 will bring the book and stand back to the table.
- **NEVER REMOVE ANYTHING FROM THE ALTAR YOURSELF UNLESS DIRECTED BY THE PRIEST OR DEACON.**

### **After Communion Prayer/Concluding Rites**

The Book Bearer (Server #3 or #4) returns to the priest in the same manner as in the opening prayer (sometimes there is a special blessing, so the Server will stay). Remember to let Father close the book. After the prayer is complete, return to your chair and place the Missal on the book stand.

### **The Recessional**

Immediately after the dismissal ("*The Mass is ended, go in Peace*") and the Prayer to St. Michael, the Recessional Hymn will begin.

1. The Priest will move to the Altar and reverence it with a kiss which is the signal for the recessional.
2. After the Priest has kissed the Altar:
  - The Cross Bearer (Server #1) gets the cross and proceeds down the steps, around on the floor to the corner of the steps.
3. The Candle Bearers (Server #2 and Server #3) are to proceed in front of the Altar to get the candles. They go directly down the steps and stand in the same position as at the Entrance of the Mass.
4. When the priest genuflects, give a head bow if you are carrying anything, if not, genuflect with the priest and turn to process out.
5. The Cross Bearer with the Candle Bearers at his/her side will begin to exit at a slow reverent pace.
6. Proceed to the back of the Church and conclude together with the Prayer after Mass.

### **After Mass**

1. Server #1 and Server #2 and Server #3 return the Cross and the Processional Candles to the Vesting Room.
2. Extinguish all candles by GENTLY blowing so the wax does not splatter.
3. Hang your Cassock and Surplice in the right place, in the Vesting Room – **DO NOT THROW THEM ON THE FLOOR. HANG THEM ON A HANGER** according to the size.

**REMEMBER:**

If you can't make it when you are scheduled,  
it is **your** responsibility to get a substitute!

## Requirements for Altar Server Candidates

1. Must be at least in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. Be an active member of Sacred Heart community and believe in the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church.
3. Be willing to pray aloud and make appropriate responses during the Mass.
4. Wear shoes and clothing that are clean and appropriate for Mass.
5. Wear appropriate clothing to church for serving even if not scheduled: you may be asked to serve.
6. Be punctual, arrive at the church **at least 15 minutes before Mass starts.**
7. Stay alert and attentive during Mass, ready to be of service.
8. Serve as part of a team without drawing attention to yourself or away from the Mass.
9. **Show absolute reverence at the Altar in your total demeanor/behavior.**
10. Face the Altar with reverence when standing or sitting.
11. **Absolutely no chitchatting or laughing while serving.**
12. Chewing gum is NOT PERMITTED in Church.
13. Take direction from Liturgical Coordinators for the Mass that you are serving.
14. Don't be afraid to ask the priest questions before Mass if you are concerned or confused about anything.
15. **You can serve any time when you are in the church even if you are not schedule.**

### *Notes:*

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# OBJECTS, PLACES, AND NAMES

Here is an alphabetical listing of the names, places, and *things that Altar Servers should know*.  
*Memorize these terms and know how to find the places and identify the objects.*

## ALB

The long white garment worn by Priests, Deacons and Altar Servers during Mass. It is a reminder of the baptismal garment worn when the new Christian "Put on Christ."

## ALTAR

The holy table upon which the Priest offers the sacrifice of the Mass.

## ALTAR CLOTH

The white cloth covering the Altar.

## AMBO *(Also called a lectern or pulpit)*

The stand from which the Word of God is proclaimed during the Readings of sacred scripture.



## AMBRY

The Ambry holds the Holy Oils which are used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick. The Holy Oils may be visible to remind the



community that God chooses to use the things of the earth to impart His grace.

## ASSEMBLY

The assembly is sometimes called the People of God, the Church or the Congregation. It is everyone seated in the Church who have assembled for worship.

## ASPERGILLUM

An aspergillum is the metal sprinkler used to sprinkle holy water.



## ASPERSORIUM

A bucket that holds Holy Water.

## BAPTISMAL FONT

The Baptismal Font is the pool (or vessel) near the doors of the church which is used for administering the Sacrament of Baptism.



## BENEDICTION

Benediction (*which means Blessing*) refers to a special worship service when the Blessed Sacrament (*The Body of Christ*) is placed in a Monstrance with a special glass for viewing; the people are blessed with the Blessed Sacrament during the Benediction service.

## BLESSED SACRAMENT

This is another term used for the consecrated bread which has become the sacramental Body of Christ.

## BOAT

The Boat is a vessel used to carry the grains of incense before the incense is placed in the Thurible.



### BOOK OF THE GOSPELS

The large Decorative book which contains the Readings from the Holy Gospels to be proclaimed at Mass. It may be carried in procession at the entrance and then placed on the Altar.



### ROMAN MISSAL STAND

A brass, metal stand used to hold the Missal on the Altar.



### CANDLE LIGHTER AND SNUFFER

Server's long or short handled object with an extendable wax taper for lighting candles on one side and an inverted cup for extinguishing candles on the opposite side.



### CHALICE



The large gold or silver cup that is used by the priest that holds the wine to be consecrated and becomes the Blood of Christ. The smaller

chalices are used for the distribution of the Blood of Christ during Communion.

### CHASUBLE

The large outer garment worn by a priest – usually green, purple, white, or red depending on the liturgical season.

### CINCTURE

The long cord or rope sometimes worn around the waist over the Alb.

### CIBORIUM

A Ciborium is a special sacred vessel with a lid that is used to hold consecrated hosts. The consecrated hosts



that are not consumed at the end of the



Mass, are placed in Ciboria (*the plural of Ciborium*) and then placed in the

Tabernacle. Ciborium

bowls are used for the distribution of the Body of Christ.

### COPE

The cope is a large cape worn by the celebrant in processions and other sacred actions. For example, Baptism, during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Thursday, Corpus Christi.

### CORPORAL

The linen cloth folded to appear square, that has a cross at the center of the lower



edge (*some have the cross in the center*).

The sacred vessels, containing the offerings that are to be consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ, are placed on the corporal. **Important Note:** *The sacred vessels bearing the body and blood of Christ are placed on this cloth during the Mass. Consequently, since fragments of the Body*

*of our Lord may still be present, it is always treated with special care.*

### **CREDESCENCE TABLE**

A Credence Table is a small table used for holding the sacred vessels that will be used during the Mass.



### **CRUET**

A Cruet is a small, crystal bottle with a stopper used for water or wine.



### **FLAGON**

The bottle or pitcher-like vessel used to hold the wine which will be consecrated at Mass for the Communion of the people. It is brought forth with the gifts.



### **VESTIBULE (NARTHEX)**

The Narthex or Gathering Space is the area before entering through the glass-paneled doors into the Nave of the Church.

### **HAND WASHING TOWEL**

The hand washing towels (also referred to as finger towels) are made from terrycloth and are used by the priest to dry his hands after the ritual washing during Mass. *Notice that the terry-cloth, or towel material, is quite different in appearance from the linen used for Corporals and Purificators.*



### **HOLY OILS**



The Holy Oils are displayed on the wall near the Baptismal Font. They are the Oil of

Catechumens, Oil of Sacred Chrism, and the Oil of the Infirm (Sick). These oils are special oils that are blessed by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass each year. The oils are then used throughout the year for Baptisms, Confirmation, Ordination of Priests and Deacons, Consecration of churches, and the Anointing of the Sick.

### **HOST**

The Host is the flat unleavened bread which will be consecrated and become the Body of Christ. The Priest's host is generally larger than the others so that it may be seen by everyone during the consecration.

### **LAVABO BOWL & TOWEL**

A dish called a 'Lavabo bowl' and the small terrycloth towel called a 'finger towel' are used by the priest to symbolically wash his hands before beginning Consecration.



### LECTIONARY

The Lectionary is the book containing the readings from sacred scripture that are proclaimed from the Ambo by the Lectors during Mass.



### LUNA

A special holder for the consecrated host that has round glass covers to permit viewing of the Eucharist. The Lunette can then be fitted into a Monstrance for exposition during Benediction or into the Custodia, a metal receptacle designed to hold the Luna, which is then reserved in the Tabernacle.



### MASTER of CEREMONIES (MC)

In more solemn Masses, especially those celebrated by a Bishop, a leader who helps direct the liturgical action (*usually a priest, deacon, or seminarian*) may be called the Master of Ceremonies. His role is simply to assure that the liturgical rites proceed as planned, with everybody in place and doing their part. The Master of Ceremonies may be visible throughout the liturgy.

### MONSTRANCE

A tall gold-plated or silver vessel used to expose the Blessed Sacrament during Benediction or Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. It has a circular clear glass window-door behind which the Luna is inserted holding the Blessed



Sacrament. Often it is designed with what appears to be simulated sun rays radiating from its center.

### NAVE

The Nave is the main body of the Church building where the assembly is seated.

### PALL

The small, stiff linen square which the priests will use to cover the Chalice.



### PASCHAL CANDLE

The Paschal Candle (sometimes referred to as the Christ Candle) is the very tall decorated candle that generally stands by the Baptismal Font. It is lit during Baptisms, Funeral Masses, and Masses during the Easter Season.



### PATEN

The small shallow round plate or bowl shaped plate, on which the Priest's Host is placed.



### Prie Dieu

The kneeler that is used by Altar Servers

### PURIFICATOR

The small linen cloth with a cross sometimes at the center which the



Priest or Deacon uses to clean the Chalice – these are folded into a long rectangle shape to avoid confusion with Corporals, which are folded as squares. **Important Note:** *Since the Purificator will come into contact with the Precious Blood when wiping the communion cups and chalices, it is treated with special care.*

### **PYX**

A metal case or a pocket watch-shaped case in which Communion is brought to the sick and the homebound.



### **ROMAN MISSAL**

Contains all the prayers and rituals said by the Celebrant and Deacon during Mass. Included are the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word without Scriptures, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rites.



### **SACRISTY, VESTING ROOM**

The door to the Vesting Room is located in the back of the church. This Vesting Room is where the special vestments for the Servers are kept and where Servers will vest.

### **SACRISTY, WORK**

The Working Sacristy is the room where all of the sacred vessels, sacred books, unconsecrated bread and wine, and Altar linens are kept for liturgical celebrations.

### **SANCTUARY**

The Sanctuary is a Sacred, consecrated area around the Altar of a church where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated; and the



where the Altar, Ambo, Tabernacle, Credence Table, Priest, Deacon, and Server chairs are located.

### **STOLE**

The stole is a long narrow band of material that resembles a shawl and is the sign of authority of the Priest or Deacon. The Priest wears it straight down and the Deacon wears it to one side.

### **TABERNACLE**

The Tabernacle is the locked gold cabinet on the back Altar behind the Sacrificial Altar. The Tabernacle is used to reserve consecrated hosts which are the Body of Christ. Because the Tabernacle houses the Blessed Sacrament we pay special reverence to the Tabernacle. A lighted candle (the red vigil lamp) is kept burning above the Tabernacle at all times when the Body of Christ is in the Tabernacle. When we cross in front of the Tabernacle we always genuflect except





during Mass (when we are directed toward the Altar – place of Sacrifice).

### **THURIBLE**

The Thurible is sometimes referred to as a censer, and is a special vessel suspended from chains in which glowing charcoal is contained. The priest sprinkles incense from the boat over the glowing charcoal during liturgies when incense is used.



The **THURIFER** is the server responsible and carrying the Thurible during the Liturgy or celebration.