Guidelines for



ALTAR
SERVERS

St. John
Henry Newman
Parish

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About Altar Serving

Altar servers, by their skills, knowledge and growing experience, serve the smooth-running of the liturgy: they carry, bring and fetch the things needed by the priest or bishop who is presiding; they ring the bells, as appropriate, and they carry the candles in procession. They can also help to prepare the altar, as well as the credence and offertory tables, before Mass begins, as well as helping clear things away afterwards.

Altar Servers when taking part in the Liturgy by carrying out their duties offer a witness to all. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the bond of friendship with Jesus.

"Altar Servers are very close to Jesus in the Eucharist, and this is the most important sign of his friendship for each one of us. Do not forget it" stated Pope Benedict XVI, (Address to Altar Servers, August 2, 2006)

The Altar Server's Ministry is a unique one in the Catholic Church. Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed to so closely play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist.

When someone serves the priests and deacons, they serve the people of God, and above all, they serve Christ.

Altar Servers must remember that everything that they do is for the Glory of God. They do it out of love for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Ignatius of Loyola called this attitude

"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM".

This means

"All for the Honor and Glory of God".

Altar Servers do things that others will never do. They learn things that others will never know. They see the Mass in ways that others may never see it. They should do it all for the Honor and Glory of God. It is a privilege for anyone to undertake this ministry in the Church.

How to become an Altar Server

If you are interested in becoming an Altar Server please approach the Parish Priest in the first instance who will advise if there is availability. If the Parish Priest agrees that you should begin the process of applying to undertake the Ministry of Altar Server in our parish you must:

If the Candidate is Under 18 (Safer Recruitment with parental consent)

1) A Parent/Guardian must be registered with the parish (you can do this by visiting www.stnewmanpairsh.org).

2) A Parent/Guardian must request the application form for the young person to registered as an Altar Server.

   This will be emailed to you. The form includes permission for livestreaming and photos and basic contact information.

   This will then be kept securely on our data base and basic information printed and kept in the locked safe of each church which is accessed by safer recruited adults only. This is so that if your child is serving at a church different to their usual one we can be sure that they are registered etc.

3) Those under 18 years old must always be accompanied to church.

4) CCTV is used in all public areas of our churches and halls which record sound and images. Please see posters in porches for further details

5) Livestreaming is used in all public areas of our churches which record sound and images. Please see posters in porches for further details

6) Young people should only be left in a room where there are two appropriately appointed adults on duty to chaperone them.

If the Candidate is Over 18 (no over 18 year old is permitted to undertake the role without completing the Safer Recruitment Process and Training)

1) You must first of all be registered with the parish (you can do this by visiting www.stnewmanpairsh.org).

2) You must request the application form which will be emailed to you.

   This begins the Safer Recruitment Process (including the appropriate DBS Check) and includes permission for livestreaming and photos and basic contact Information. Furthe information can be found in the porch of each church.

   If you would like more information on the process then please click on this link to the Safer-Recruitment-Flowchart-DBS-Role.pdf for further information, but please don't worry, our Parish Safeguarding Representative will guide you through the whole process.

3) You should never allow yourself to be left alone with an under 18 year old.

4) CCTV is used in all public areas of our churches and halls which record images and sound. Information regarding our CCTV procedures/policies can be found in the porch of each church.

5) Servers themselves must actively practice the Catholic faith each weekend without fail.

6) Adult Altar Servers (18 and over) must comply with the Role Description on Page 9

Qualifications to become an Altar Server

1) Should normally have made their First Holy Communion at least six months ago.

2) Servers (or if under 18 their families) must be registered members of St. John Henry Newman Parish and attend Mass every weekend.

3) Servers themselves must actively practice the Catholic Faith each weekend without fail.

4) Adult Altar Servers (18 and over) must comply with the Role Description on Page 9

Knowledge needed in order to become an Altar Server

1) A new server must be willing to become very familiar with the Mass, including the parts of the Mass and the sacred vessels used during the Mass.

2) They must understand why the Mass is important, and what happens during Mass.

3) A server will be required to demonstrate that they know the Order of Mass, the prayers of the Mass, and the postures and responses during Mass. All of this will be taught during the new server training period.

4) Altar Servers must also demonstrate the ability to make use of the "tools of the trade" such as matches, candles, candle lighters, thuribles, books and sacred vessels. All of this will be taught in training.

5) Altar Servers will be trained to handle all the tasks assigned to each specific duty. This is usually undertaken by shadowing a more advanced Altar Server

6) Altar Servers will need to know the prayer responses of the Mass and learn the names of sacred vessels.

The General Conduct of Altar Servers.

1) Servers must be in a state of grace to serve at Mass, meaning they should attend Mass each weekend and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.

2) Altar Servers should come to Mass prepared to meet the Lord at Holy Communion.

3) Altar Servers should wear clothes appropriate to the ministry they are undertaking, thinking especially about headwear and shoes.

5) Once an Altar Server puts on their cassock and cotta, their conduct always must be professional and reverent. They are on duty!

6) Altar Servers must always show respect for the sanctity of the church and the sacred vessels. The care of the vessels and vestments is a primary responsibility of the Altar Server.

At what time should an Altar Server get to church?

1) Adult Altar Servers are asked to be at church at least 20 minutes before a Mass so that they can check that the correct vestments are laid out, books correctly marked, candles lit and sacred vessels are in the right place etc.

2) Young People Altar Servers should arrive at church at least ten minutes before the Mass is due to begin. This so that you put on your cassock and cotta and be allotted your duties in good time.

Can Altar Servers serve at any church in the Parish?

The simple answer is yes!

Please do serve at the various churches of the parish when attending Mass or devotions. Please ask an Altar Server who is based at that church to provide you with a cassock and cotta and make you aware of any differences in practice.

The Lead Altar Server or Priest for that Mass will check if you are registered as Altar Server before allowing you to proceed. This is to ensure the safety and well-being of all including the person asking to serve in another church.

General Guidance for Altar Serving when on duty.

This is not an exhaustive list but some general pointers

1) The posture of the Altar Server should be one of near invisibility. If people are paying attention at Mass, they should not even notice you. If someone looks at you, they should see a server who is reverent and paying attention. It should remind them that they, too, should be paying attention to the Mass, and not to you. In general, your posture should be confident, but calm. You should look reverent and prayerful, but comfortable.

2) Move smoothly, but deliberately, not slowly. If you are carrying candles then mirror the other person, do not rush ahead and carry items at the same height.

3) Always look "where the action is". When someone is speaking or reading part of the Mass, you are listening to them. When the Eucharist is being consecrated, you are looking at it.

4) Make sure you vocally take part in the Mass.

5) Make no distracting motions or noises. Do not wave, smile, or wink at people.

6) Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a handkerchief or facial tissue. Make a habit of bringing them with you in case they are needed. Suppress any urge to yawn.

7) When not carrying anything hands should be together in a prayer manner. When sitting hands should be placed upon laps. Please refrain from crossing your legs.

8) When standing, stand up straight.

9) If you are holding something, hold the item firmly with one or both hands, as needed. The free hand, if you have one, should cover your heart. Grasp items firmly and deliberately. When handing something to someone else, make sure they have a firm grip so as not to drop it.

If you are holding a book for the priest to read check its at the right height and that the page is open at the correct place

When handing the cruets to the Priest or Deacon make sure the handle is pointing towards them so they can take it easily

10) The procession is a sacred act. It is more than just a way for the priest to get to the altar. It is a very formal way of welcoming and glorifying Christ himself into our presence.

When you process, walk at a deliberate, but respectful pace. It should be just slower than you normally walk. If you are not the lead in the procession, keep pace with the lead.

When carrying something while processing, hold it reverently with both hands and slightly in front of you, not resting on your chest.

11) Walk. Never, run. You are the model of reverence, calm and grace. Walk deliberately to your station. Watch for others in your way and plan to step around them. Never get in the way of the Sacred Ministers, or of any minister holding the Blessed Sacrament.

12) Only genuflect and/or bow to the tabernacle at the beginning and end of Mass.

Once Mass begins, the focus of our attention is no longer on Christ present in the tabernacle but the sacrifice of Christ on the Altar, in which we are taking part.

'The norms' of the Church make it clear that there is not to be a genuflection toward the tabernacle during the celebration of the Mass.

13) As with any ministry within the church, if you are Altar Serving you should where possible not undertake any other ministry such as reading or being an Extraordinary Minster of the Eucharist. This is especially the case at weekend Masses when Altar Servers have more duties generally, and adult Altar Servers will also often be overseeing the work of younger ones.

14) Make sure that you hang up your robes after Mass. Robes should not be left on the floor or left in a mess.

15) Please assist with the 'tidying up' after Mass.

Adult (Over 18) Altar Server Role Description

Appointed by and responsible to: The Parish Priest

Function: To serve at Mass and train and supervise younger Altar Servers

Main Responsibilities:

1) To help to develop and co-ordinate a skilled team of servers able to respond to the needs of the Parish.

2) To monitor the practice of servers, implementing changes, as agreed with the Parish Priest, where necessary to enhance the quality of the liturgy and ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults.

3) To encourage and train new servers.

4) To liaise with the Priest and other ministers presiding at the liturgy and ensure that servers are available if needed.

5) To encourage in the servers a prayerful approach, fostering an appreciation of the sacredness of the liturgy.

6) To ensure that the ministry of servers is conducted in accordance with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales as administered by the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

   This means that no adult must ever be alone with children [anyone under the age of 18]

7) To ensure the physical safety and well-being of children and young people whilst carrying out their responsibilities. To minimise all risks of abuse and take action to report concerns and/or allegations immediately.

8) To ensure that adequate facilities are available for servers.

Person Specification for Over 18's.

1) Be a person of faith and prayer, aware of the call to service and ministry of the Church.

2) Be able to share faith with conviction, enthusiasm, love, joy and hope.

3) Be committed to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the ethos of the Parish.

4) Be open to the diversity and richness of the liturgy.

5) Be enthusiastic, reliable and discreet.

6) Have good communication, leadership and organisational skills

7) Be willing to undergo the pre-recruitment checks required by the Church and to adhere to safeguarding guidance.

   This post will require an Enhanced DBS check.

   If you would like more information on the Safer Recruitment Process then please click on this link to the Safer-Recruitment-Flowchart-DBS-Role.pdf for further information, but please don't worry our Parish Safeguarding Representative will guide you through the whole process.

8) Undertake the appropriate training for working with Vulnerable Adults and Children before commencing your role (this will need to be renewed every three years)

   Further information can be found at the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) at www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk

   You will need to undertake the Level Three Training.

   Level 3 Safeguarding for Volunteers in the Catholic Church (DBS)

Altar Server Chaperone Role Description

Appointed by: The Parish Priest

Responsible to: The Parish Priest or delegated Altar Server Coordinator

Function: To supervise and support altar servers, particularly those under the age of 18, ensuring that they are properly prepared for their duties and that their safety and well-being are maintained before, during and after the liturgy.

Main Responsibilities:

1) To ensure that Altar Servers are appropriately supervised while carrying out their duties, from their arrival in the sacristy.

2) To help altar servers prepare for Mass by ensuring that they:

    a) arrive in sufficient time;
    b) are correctly vested;
    c) understand their allocated duties; and
    d) have the equipment and facilities they need.

3) To encourage altar servers to behave responsibly and prayerfully, fostering an appreciation of the sacredness of the liturgy.

4) To liaise with the priest, Adult Altar Servers and other ministers to ensure that the servers are prepared and that appropriate supervision is available.

5) To support the development of a skilled and dependable team of altar servers who can respond to the needs of the parish.

6) To observe the servers' practice and conduct, raising any concerns or suggested improvements with the Parish Priest or Altar Server Coordinator.

7) To ensure that the ministry of altar serving is conducted in accordance with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, as administered by the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

8) To ensure that no adult is ever alone with a child or young person under the age of 18.

9) To promote the physical safety and well-being of children and young people while they are carrying out their duties, minimise foreseeable risks and report any safeguarding concerns or allegations immediately in accordance with parish and diocesan procedures.

10) To maintain appropriate boundaries at all times and provide a positive example of responsible Christian conduct.

11) To ensure that adequate changing, robing and waiting facilities are available and used safely and appropriately.

12) To report any accident, incident, unsafe practice or concern promptly to the Parish Priest or other designated person.

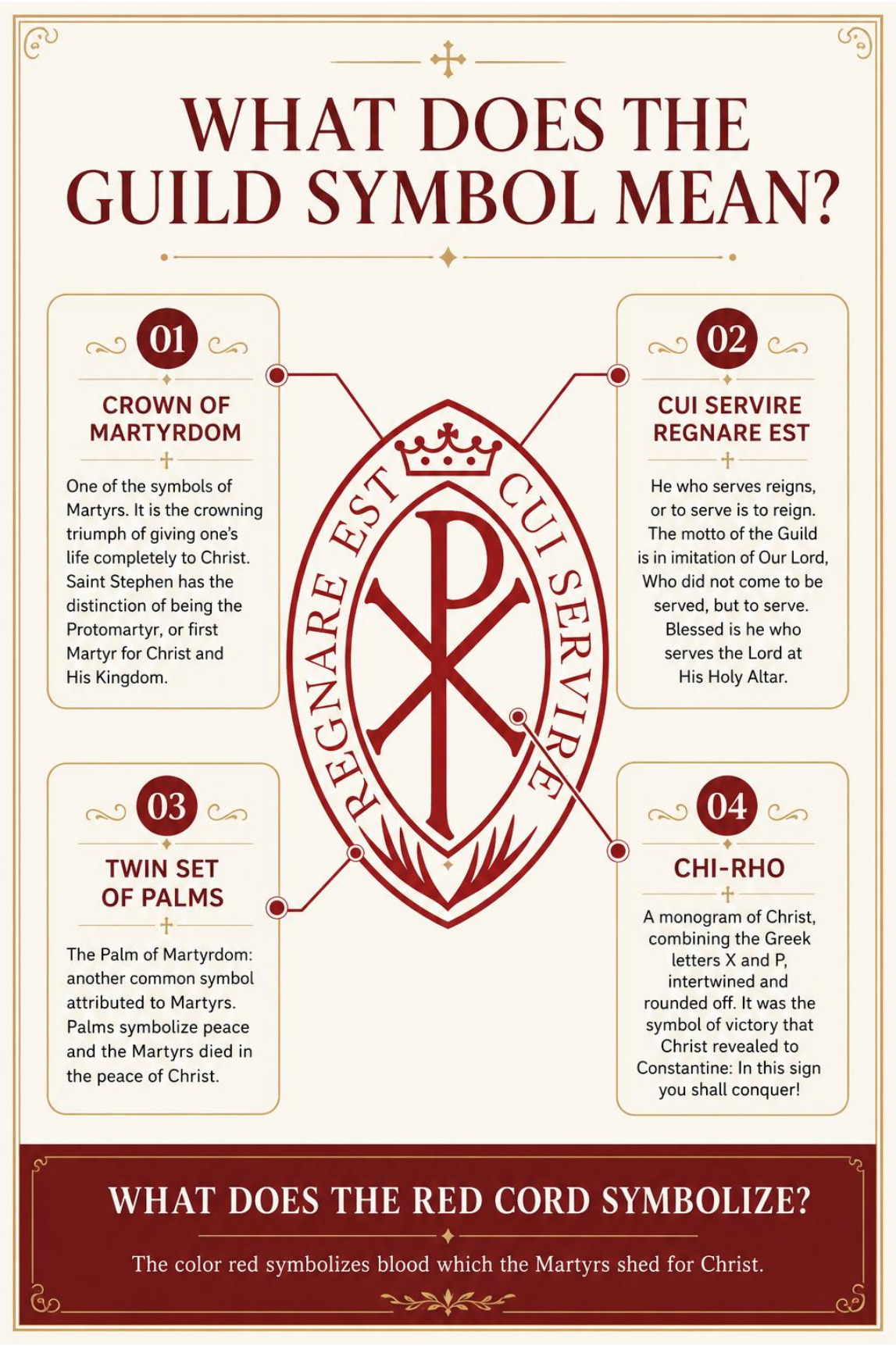
Training and Safer Recruitment

An Altar Server Chaperone must complete the same training and safer-recruitment process required of an Adult Altar Server, as specified above.

The individual must not begin chaperoning altar servers until all required training, checks and approvals have been completed.

The Guild of St. Stephen

The Guild of St Stephen is the International Organisation of Altar Servers founded in England in 1904 by Father Hamilton McDonald when he formed a Society of Altar Servers at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in London. Those who become Altar Servers in our parish are invited to become Members of the Guild after a year of serving. You will see them wearing the guild medal. They are usually enrolled at the St. Stephen's Day Mass each year.



ARTICLES & VESTMENTS USED AT CATHOLIC MASS

ON AND NEAR THE ALTAR



CIBORIUM — Covered vessel that holds consecrated hosts.



CHALICE — Sacred cup used for the Precious Blood.



PALL — Stiff square placed over the chalice.



PURIFICATOR — White cloth used to wipe the chalice.



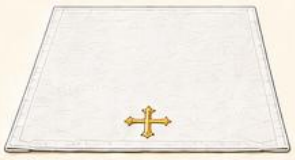
LAVABO BOWL & TOWEL — Used when the priest washes his hands.



HOSTS & PATEN — The bread to be consecrated and the small plate that holds the priest's host.



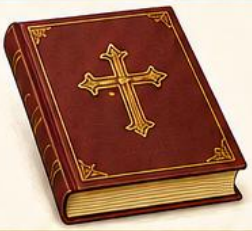
ROMAN MISSAL — Book containing the prayers of the Mass.



CORPORAL — Square white cloth on which the sacred vessels are placed.



CRUETS — Small vessels holding the water and wine used at Mass.



LECTIONARY — Book containing the Scripture readings proclaimed at Mass.

VESTMENTS



ALB — Long white garment worn by ordained ministers.



PRIEST'S STOLE — Worn around the neck, hanging straight down.



CHASUBLE — Outer vestment worn by the priest at Mass.



DEACON'S STOLE — Worn diagonally across the chest.



HUMERAL VEIL — Cloth worn over the shoulders when carrying the Blessed Sacrament.

St. John Henry Newman Parish

ALTAR SERVER PRAYERS

PRAYER BEFORE SERVING MASS.

Priest:

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love:
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

All:

And you shall renew the face of the earth.

**O, God, to whom every heart is open,
every desire known
and from whom no secrets are hidden;
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the help of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
faithfully serve you,
and worthily praise your Holy Name.
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.**

St. Joseph: **Pray for us**
St. John Henry Newman: **Pray for us**
Blessed Nicolas Barré: **Pray for us**
St. Francis Cabrini: **Pray for us**
St. Thomas More: **Pray for us**
St. Stephen: **Pray for us**
Our Lady, Queen of the Holy Rosary: **Pray for us**

PRAYER AFTER SERVING MASS.

All:

**Lord Jesus Christ,
I thank you for the privilege of having served at your Altar.
Now, as I leave the church, I ask that I may continue
to be aware of your presence. Amen.
Glory be to the Father ...**



Thank you for your help in making our Mass be a worthy offering to God.
Before you leave church light a candle in thanksgiving
for the honour of serving and say a prayer for someone or
something important to you – no need to pay for the candle. Fr. Craig