



Immaculate Conception Church Liturgical Guidelines

Altar Servers

We who are called to serve at the altar share in a ministry that has a long history in the worship of the Church. Although this ministry may be described in terms of service to the presider, in reality, our service is to the community. Our actions help the community to celebrate the mysteries of our faith with lasting good effect in our lives. As with the other liturgical ministers, our posture and attitude set the tone and the example for others in the community. Our purposeful motion speaks of liturgy that was prepared with care, a celebration in which each person in the assembly assumes an active role. Our good deportment reflects a prayerful spirit, and the care of a humble servant. (Liturgical Ministry: A Practical Guide to Spirituality by Donna M. Cole)

All liturgical ministers are registered parishioners and should be in good standing with the Catholic Church. The guidelines that follow conform to the theological and liturgical principles in the diocesan guidelines.

Attire and Behavior

Ministers, regardless of age, dress in **business casual attire**. Sneakers/athletic shoes, flip-flops, jeans, T-shirts, sweat/jogging suits, shorts, and skimpy clothing (e.g. spaghetti straps or strapless tops/dresses) of any type are not appropriate, as well as buttons/pins advertising personal agendas, (e.g. political/sports). Always come to the church dressed in case you are needed to serve as a replacement. **Wearing of the liturgical color of the day is encouraged.**

Training and Formation

Technical and practical training are a necessary part of every ministry. Initial orientation and training are required before the new minister enters service. Periodic formation events held to benefit all parish liturgical ministers.

Scheduling/Substitution Procedure

Ministers are required to find their own substitutions; only trained liturgical ministers serve during a liturgy. Scheduling is handled through the Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP) App. This app is downloaded for free through your app store. Schedules are made at three-month intervals when you will be prompted to enter your unavailable dates. The app will notify you by email two days prior to your scheduled service date. If you are unavailable for your scheduled time then you request a substitute through the MSP App, which will notify you when the position is filled.

All Liturgical Ministers check-in at the kiosk located in the back of the church.



Photo 1. The Liturgical Ministers Closet.

- A. *Ministry Scheduler Pro Kiosk.* The MSP App will prompt you through the check-in process.
- B. *Second Collections List.* For Ushers.
- C. *Alert Messages for all Liturgical Ministers.* Special instructions will be posted here as needed.
- D. *Ushers' Attendance Chart.* To record number of people in attendance at weekend and special liturgies.
- E. *Lector Notes.* Lists which Readings(s) to use when there are options.
- F. *Liturgical Minister Codes.* For identifying which position a Liturgical Minister is serving.
- G. *Weekday Lector Schedule.* For those serving as Lector at weekday liturgies.



Photo 2. Presentation Table at the rear of the center aisle.

- A. *Presider's ciborium.* With unconsecrated hosts.
- B. *Presider's chalice.* With unconsecrated wine.
- C. *Book of the Gospels.*

Day of the Liturgy

Preparation Prior to the Liturgy

1. All Altar Servers should arrive no later than 20 minutes before the liturgy.
2. Know when you are scheduled to serve. Always make sure there is a replacement if you are unable to fulfill your commitment. Youth: *You* are responsible for your assignment, *not your parents*.
3. Check in using the Ministry Scheduler Pro Kiosk. The MSP App will prompt you through the check-in process. (Photo #1, Page 2).
4. Go to the sacristy and find a server's robe in the closet. Your robe should be ankle length.
5. Take time to pray. The following prayer is a suggested adaptation of the direction of intention by St. Francis de Sales (or use your own words):
“Lord, I give you my actions and ministry. Help me to conduct myself in a manner that will give praise to you and will assist my brothers and sisters in their worship of your holy name. Amen.”
6. Check the following:
 - a. Check the presider's binder (found in the sacristy) to see if there are any Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) to the Sick and Homebound. Inform the presider before the liturgy of how many hosts will be needed.
 - b. Take the presider's binder and Roman Missal into the sanctuary and place it on the steps near your chair 5 minutes before the liturgy.

- c. Check that the correct number of ciboria, chalices, and purificators have been set on the preparation table (see picture below).
 - d. Retrieve the processional cross from its stand in the corner of the wall near the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and go to the rear of the center aisle to wait for the liturgy to begin.
7. Server 2 (S2)
- a. Place a Breaking Bread hymnal marked "Altar Server's Copy" on each server's chair.
 - b. Go to the rear of the center aisle and check that the presider's large ciborium, chalice and the Book of the Gospels are on the presentation table there.
 - c. The Breaking Bread book marked "Presider's Copy" should be on the shelf under the presentation table. Wait there for the liturgy to begin.
8. Normal Order of Procession:
- a. Cross Bearer
 - b. Other Altar Server(s)
 - c. Lector with the Book of the Gospels
 - d. Presider

Preparation Table

This is located behind the altar wall, nearest to the presider's chair.



Photo 3. Set-up for 5:00 p.m., 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Weekend Liturgies.

- A. *Tray with 4 EMHC ciboria.* The tabernacle ciborium may become the 6th ciborium if it is overflowing with more hosts than are needed to be kept there.
- B. *Bowl with towel.*
- C. *Large water pitcher.*
- D. *Tray with 5 EMHC chalice and 5 purificators.*
- E. *Small water pitcher.*

During the Liturgy

General Attitude and Posture

Your first ministry is to pray with the assembly. It is important that you participate and do not talk unnecessarily or display any distracting behavior.

The Entrance and Opening Rites

1. The Cross Bearer (S1) leads the procession. Once reaching the front of the church, the Cross Bearer carries the processional cross around the front of the font, placing in stand along the wall.
2. S2 stands at the right side (choir side) in the ministers' line. Leave space for the Lector.
3. The Lector goes to place the Book of the Gospels within the ambo.
4. Once the lector returns to the line, all bow together, then go to their designated chairs.
5. S1 sits nearest the steps to hold the presider's binder (or sometimes the Roman Missal) for him. When the presider gestures for the binder, move to stand in front of him and hold up the binder.
6. When the presider sits, all sit for the Liturgy of the Word. Altar servers should sit, stand, listen, and respond to the readings along with the rest of the assembly.

Liturgy of the Word

1. Sometimes there may be a special event after the homily, for example, dismissal of the Candidates and/or Catechumens, Baptisms, etc. Follow the directions of the presider.
2. All stand for the Creed.
3. S1 opens the presider's binder to the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) tab and waits for the presider to gesture for him/her to hold the binder for those prayers.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar

Once the Universal Prayer (Intercessions) has finished, the preparation of the altar begins. Please Note: the following instructions occur in alternating succession. Server 1, step 1; Server 2, step 1; etc.

Server 1 (S1):

1. Take Roman Missal to the altar and remain there.
2. Wait for the small pitcher, and purificator to be brought by S2.

3. Wait for S2 to bring the tray of chalices. Place them along the right edge of the corporal. (Photo #4, Page 6)
4. Return to your chair.

Server 2 (S2):

1. Retrieve corporal from the preparation table to the altar (unfold it, do not shake out). Arrange corporal one inch from the right side of the altar, along the bottom edge.
2. Bring small pitcher, purificator to right, front. (Photo #4, Page 6)
3. Bring chalices tray to S1.
4. Return to your chair.



Photo 4. The altar, as prepared during the Collection.

- A. *Roman Missal.*
- B. *Small Pitcher.*
- C. *Purificator.*

Presentation of Gifts

Note: the following instructions occur in alternating succession. Server 1, step 1; Server 2, step 1; etc.

Server 1 (S1)

1. When the Offertory gifts are ready to be brought forward, follow the presider to the front of the center aisle and stand at his left (choir) side. Walk behind the presider to get there, not in front.
2. Retrieve the presider's chalice from the presider.
3. Follow behind S2 and wait near the presider's platform while holding the presider's chalice.

4. After presider adds water to the chalice, allow the presider to take the chalice and give the small pitcher.
5. Return small pitcher to the preparation table. Return to seat.

Server 2 (S2)

1. When the Offertory gifts are ready to be brought forward, follow the presider and S1 to the front of the center aisle and stands at his right (font) side.
2. Retrieve the large ciborium from the presider.
3. Carry the presider's ciborium to the altar and place it near the center edge of the altar. Go to the preparation table, retrieve the bowl with hand towel and large pitcher, and wait near the cross until S1 returns from the altar.
4. S2 takes the bowl, towel, and pitcher to the presider for his washing of hands. Once presider finishes, S2 returns the bowl, towel, and large pitcher to the preparation table. Return to seat.

Eucharistic Prayer

1. Facing the presider, altar servers pray with the rest of the assembly, standing when the assembly stands and saying or singing the responses along with them. It is important that you participate and do not talk or display any distracting behavior.
2. At the Sign of Peace, both servers go to the side of the altar (NOT the altar platform) and share the Sign of Peace with the presider.

Server 1 (S1)

1. S1 takes the Roman Missal from the Presider and places it on the table behind the altar. S1 brings the tray of ciboria to the top step by the Presiders Chair.
2. Once tray contains all ciboria, S1 places the tray in the center of the altar. (Photo 5, Page 8).
3. S1 then steps down to the baptismal font to stand next to S2.

Server 2 (S2)

1. S2 retrieves the ciboria from the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and places it in the tray. Then go to the short side of the baptismal font and stands near cup/wine EMHC (W1).



Photo 5. The tray of EMHC ciboria is placed on the altar during the Sign of Peace.

Reception of Communion

Servers and EMHCs line up as follow:

1. S1, S2, and W1 EMHC line up at the short side of the baptismal font.
2. All other EMHCs line up in front of the altar steps according to their assigned station.
3. S1 receives the Eucharist from the presider, then goes immediately to the altar, retrieves the presider's chalice and purificator and returns to his/her place in line.
4. S2 and W1 receive the Eucharist from the presider. Presider normally sets his ciborium on the font until he is ready for it.
5. Presider offers the Blood of Christ to the servers and W1, leaving his chalice with W1.
6. Presider then distributes the Eucharist to the other EMHCs. W1 follows to distribute the Blood of Christ.
7. While the presider distributes the Eucharist to all EMHCs, S1 proceeds to the altar, picks up the first EMHC chalices and purificators, and waits to begin passing them down to S2.* *This may be adjusted for servers who are younger/shorter*
8. S2 goes to the top step (NOT the altar platform). S2 then receives each EMHC chalice and purificator to pass to the presider for EMHCs/Wine.
9. S1 carries the tray of EMHC ciboria from the altar to the presider and holds it for him while he distributes a ciborium to each EMHC/Bread; then, S1 takes the empty tray to the purification table in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel (Photo #6, Page 9) before returning to his/her chair and remains standing until the presider is seated. You may be asked to leave the binder on the presider's chair.
10. When finished, S2 proceeds to the altar, folds the corporal as it was, and places it on the preparation table at the back of the altar. He/she will also remove any other items left on the altar.

Sending Forth of EMHC/to the Sick and Homebound

If there are any EMHC/Sick and Homebound listed in the presider's binder, S1 will have the binder ready to hold for the presider when he finishes distributing Communion and comes to the foot of the altar. The binder is opened to the EMHC/Homebound tab. (Watch for the presider's cue to hold the binder.)

After Communion

1. Altar servers remain standing until the presider returns from the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.
2. S1 holds the binder for the presider for the final blessing and announcements.
3. After the final blessing, the Cross Bearer retrieves the processional cross and proceeds to the center aisle at the first row of chairs. He/she faces the altar.
4. S2 and presider go to the foot of the altar. All (except the Cross Bearer) bow. At the presider's cue or directives, all turn and process down the center aisle, with the presider exiting last.

After the Liturgy

1. All servers go to the baptismal font and wait until the final hymn is finished before completing the liturgy.
2. Set out 6 Purificators if a liturgy is to follow.
3. S2 takes the presider's binder to the glass table in the sacristy.
4. Servers go to the sacristy, remove their robes, and hang them neatly in the closet.



Photo 6. Purification Table in Blessed Sacrament Chapel. EMHCs place the sacred vessels in the trays after distributing Communion. The clear glass pitcher contains is half-filled with water to help the presider purify the sacred vessels.

Glossary of terms

Alb:	A long white garment worn by priests, deacons, and lay ministers.
Altar Cloth:	Large cloth covering the altar.
Ambo:	A dignified and stationary place from which the readings, Responsorial Psalm, and the Prayer of the Faithful (Intercessions) are proclaimed.
Boat:	A small metal container that holds the incense to be put into the thurible. It has a cover and comes with a small spoon.
Chalice:	A specially made cup used to hold the Blood of Christ during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
Chasuble:	The priestly vestment worn only for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
Ciborium/Paten:	A specially made vessel/bowl used to hold the Body of Christ. The plural of Ciborium is Ciboria.
Cincture:	A roped belt, usually white, which is sometimes worn with an alb.
Cope:	A cape-like vestment worn by a priest or deacon for liturgies outside of Mass, e.g. processions on Palm Sunday and the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.
Corporal:	The white cloth which is placed over the altar cloth, on which the chalice and ciborium are placed during the Preparation of the Altar.
Credence Table:	(Called the Preparation Table here at ICC) Table where the vessels and other necessary items are placed for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
Cruet:	A small pitcher used to hold the water which the presider adds to the main chalice of wine during the Preparation of Gifts.
Extinguisher:	This tool is used to extinguish the flames of candles and/or light them. It has a tube on one side at the top with a retractable wick for lighting candles. The other side has a small cup for extinguishing the candles. It is very important to extend the wick after you have extinguished the flame.
Finger Towel:	Towel used to dry the presider's hands after the Offertory Procession.
Genuflect:	An act of reverence - the lowering of the right knee to the ground in front of the tabernacle.

Humeral Veil:	A cloth placed around the shoulders of a priest or deacon when he carries the Blessed Sacrament, in a procession or for benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.
Presider:	The priest who is officiating at the liturgy.
Purificator:	A cloth, usually white, used to wipe the rim of the chalice during the Communion.
Pyx:	Small container used for holding consecrated hosts when taking to the sick and homebound.
Roman Missal:	Large red book containing all liturgical prayers read by the presider.
Sacrarium:	A special sink installed in a sacristy for the cleaning of the sacred Communion vessels. It drains directly into the earth, not into the sewer.
Sanctuary:	Elevated area of the worship space that contains the altar, ambo, and presidential chair.
Sanctuary Lamp:	A candle that indicates the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.
Stole:	A narrow strip of fabric worn by ordained ministers. Priests wear the stole around the neck, hanging down in front under the chasuble.
Tabernacle:	A large, prominent container for the consecrated hosts, reserved in a church building, often in a special room called the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.
Taper:	The long, wax-coated wick of a candle extinguisher, used to light candles.
Thurible:	A metal container extended from a chain in which charcoal and incense are burned for liturgical ceremonies. It has a lid that can be raised. It is sometimes called a censer.
Thurifer:	The Altar Server who carries the thurible or censer in procession.
Vestments:	The special garments worn by the ministers within the liturgy.



About Our Pineapple: The pineapple was a staple of Indian feasts and rites. The pineapple was once an uncommon and coveted commodity. King Charles II of England designated receiving the pineapple as royal privilege and gift. In time, the pineapple became a symbol of Southern hospitality. For this reason, Immaculate Conception Church chose the pineapple as its hospitality emblem. When a new household is officially welcomed to our community, we present this symbol of hospitality and welcome.