

Tridentine Community News

July 30, 2023 – Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

Altar Server Roles



Newcomers to the Traditional Latin Mass often comment on the precise movements of the altar servers. The servers have defined roles and duties:

The **Acolytes** are the two principal servers. The one on the right as you are facing the altar is called **Acolyte 1**; it is his responsibility to ring the Sanctus Bell. The one on the left is **Acolyte 2**; he moves the Missal before the Gospel and after Holy Communion. Historically, these servers were called Acolytes because their roles were filled by men who had received (at least) the minor order of Acolyte. Current Extraordinary Form regulations allow laymen to fulfill this role, thus one needs to distinguish the Order or Ministry of Acolyte from the use of the same term to designate a server role. These same rules permit laymen servers to wear the cassock (black robe) and surplice (white outer garment), which are traditionally reserved for clerics.

One server may take the optional role of **Master of Ceremonies**, to assist the celebrant. Celebrants new to the TLM in particular benefit from the guidance of an MC. Arguably this server's most important and symbolic duty is to turn the pages of the Missal: The priest holds the thumb and index finger of each hand together from the Consecration until after Communion and is not supposed to touch any profane object while there may be particles of the Host on his fingers. Unlike the other servers, the MC's role is rather loosely defined in the rubrics, allowing for some freedom of movement in the sanctuary to assist in whatever manner may be appropriate. If incense is called for but no Thurifer is available, the MC is permitted to fulfill the role of Thurifer as a secondary duty. For more elaborate Masses, such as Solemn High and Pontifical Masses, a **Second MC** may direct the servers, while the First MC directs the sacred ministers.

At a Low Mass, the priest is assisted by one or two Acolytes and an optional Master of Ceremonies. No additional servers are allowed. If there is only one Acolyte, his position is on the opposite side of the altar from where the Altar Missal rests. Thus his position, like the Missal's, changes during the Mass. A Simple Missa Cantata, or Sung Mass, may also be celebrated with one or two Acolytes, though two are strongly preferred.

In a Solemn Missa Cantata, as we usually have on Sundays, another server is the **Thurifer**, or bearer of the censer. The Thurifer can work alone, or may be assisted by a **Boat Bearer**, who carries the container of incense. For processions, such as on Corpus Christi, a second Thurifer may be employed, to ensure that the Blessed Sacrament is continually incensed.

Two to six additional servers in a Solemn Missa Cantata fulfill the roles of **Torch Bearers**. A torch is a candle contained within a glass enclosure. In practice, regular processional or altar candles are sometimes used when true torches are not available. Torch Bearers kneel in front of the altar from the Sanctus until after Holy Communion, sentinels in front of our Lord's Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. When there are insufficient servers present to provide for torches, a Sanctus Candle may be placed on the altar during this portion of the Mass, similarly signifying that Christ is present on the altar.

In a Solemn Missa Cantata, the **Crucifer**, or Cross Bearer, carries the Crucifix in procession.

Other duties particular to a specific church, such as closing and opening the Communion Rail gates, flipping over the Communion Rail cloth, and ringing the tower bell at the Consecration, may be handled by certain servers. These are considered elements of local custom and are not dictated by rubrics.

Serving at the altar is a great privilege which provides an opportunity to learn more about the Sacred Liturgy from a close vantage point. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are often inspired in those who serve the Traditional Mass. Men and boys who have received their First Holy Communion are invited to join our altar server team. Training will be provided. Please see one of the servers after Mass if you or one of your sons are interested.

Basilica of Ste. Anne Plenary Indulgences

The Summer, 2023 newsletter of Detroit's Basilica of Ste. Anne listed the following possibilities for gaining a Plenary Indulgence, under the usual conditions, by visiting and praying an Our Father and Creed at that church:

On Sept. 20, the anniversary of the dedication of the church

On July 26, the Feast of Ste. Anne

On June 29, the Solemnity of Ss. Peter & Paul

On January 27, the anniversary of the granting of the title of basilica; and on March 8, the date of establishment of the Diocese of Detroit (*Note: these last two are not validated in the Manual of Indulgences and may be incorrect*)

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Fri. 08/04 7:00 PM: High Mass at *Old St. Mary's* (St. Dominic, Confessor) – Celebrant: Fr. David Bechill. Confessions and Devotions to the Sacred Heart before Mass. Reception after Mass.