

Serving at St. John's

Serving is just what the name says. The server assists the priest, largely by dealing with candles, cross and passing things to the priest. It is not an arduous task, nor a daunting one, but it is important. Good serving helps to ensure the smooth running of the service and thereby enhances the worship. However, errors will likely go unnoticed as most of the congregation are not watching that closely and/or don't know the difference. The priest will guide you if need be and feel free to ask questions if you are unsure. Communication between priest and server is very useful.

This outlines the serving at a regular eucharist on a Sunday morning, with the priest. If we have a visiting or substitute priest there may be minor variations. (1) and (2) are suggestions division of duties if two servers are working.

Arrival: at least 15 min before the service starts.

Robing: albs and sinctures live in the small room (*priest's vestry*) to the right of the chancel as you face the altar. (*We will sort out ones that fit. Please note that patterned, particularly wide stripes, clothes will show through. Short sleeves, or white tops are best. Also the little room is an icebox in winter...no heat!*)

Lighting the candles: Altar, epistle candle 1st (*right hand facing the altar*), gospel candle (*left hand*), ormbry (*only if reserve sacrament is present*), credence table and any extras e.g pascal or wreath as required. *Basically this is a circle starting from where you pick up the snuffer. Tradition says that the gospel candle should never burn alone. Lighters live on the shelf beyond the credence table. Hint: Prepare your books, opening the hymn book to the processional hymn, it helps.* If two servers, move the big collection plate to the gospel side. Take the cross to the bell tower.

Introit: (1) Carry in the cross, starting when the singing starts. A second server immediately follows the crucifer. (*Choose the cross you feel comfortable carrying.*) **Hold the cross with your hands well apart, the big one is top heavy. Walk slowly.** (*At the altar rail step, watch that you don't hit the sanctuary lamp, not an issue with the wooden cross.*) As you go through the altar rail step right (big cross) or left (small cross) and wait until The priest bows. Place the cross in its holder. Make sure it faces the congregation (*the big one has a front and a back*). *The 'door chain' for the wooden cross can be tricky.* (2) Sit on the epistle side (If two servers, the crucifer (1) sits on the gospel side). *It is your choice whether you stand beside the altar or in front of the chair.*

Offertory: (2) As intro is being played **remove the stoppers** from the water cruet and the wine flagon. As the singing starts move to the altar rail break, receive the bread and wine. (*If a munchkin is helping, kneel or crouch down to avoid looming over the child*). Move to the credence table, put the wine on the brass tray and give the seborium (*contains the bread*) to The priest. It is customary to exchange bows when passing vessels between priest and server. Check if he wants the second chalice. (*Rough rule of thumb, over 50 communicants likely, 2nd chalice*) Turn back to the credence table,

remove the stopper, from the wine cruet and give the cruet to The priest. (*Point the handle towards him and hold the cruet in your left hand*), pass him the wine flagon (*this can be a bit heavy and awkward, so you can either exchange flagon and empty cruet or receive the cruet then hand over the flagon*), retrieve the flagon and pass him the water. After the water is returned, put the purificator (*white cloth over the lavabo*) over your left wrist, take the lavabo (*small bowl*) in your left hand and the water cruet in your right hand, turn to The priest so that he can symbolically rinse his fingers (you pour the water) (*reverse hands if you are left handed*). Replace things on the credence table, replace the wine stoppers (**not the water**).

(1) At the start of the last verse, pick up the big plate, move to the break in the altar rail, receive the collection (*direct the plate at one sidesperson then the other, sometimes it is quite heavy, especially when there are looney bins*), place the collection on the altar beside the epistle candle, in front of the missal.

Communion: receive communion and sit ready for various possibilities. Check if the lectern seems too far forward and slide it back if need be.

If the chalice bearer prefers, (2) exchange chalices when the 1st one is nearly empty. If The priest runs low on wafers he will ask (1) you to get the reserve from the orbry. He may exchange seboria, then you place the empty on the credence table, or take a few wafers and you return the reserve to the orbry.

When communion is over, (2) passes the water to The priest and puts anything on the credence table as directed. The priest may ask you (1) to place unused wafers in the orbry . If one seborium was emptied, simply replace the lid and white 'hat' and put the one with wafers back in the orbry. If they are left over from the 1st seborium, carefully transfer them to join those in the orbry.

Recessional: At the beginning of the hymn (2) put out the candles in the reverse order to lighting. With **8 lines** of hymn left (1) get the cross and go to the break in the altar rail (followed by (2) and **slowly** process to the back. (***Be sure to lower the cross as you reach the font...it creates quite clang otherwise***). Immediately after dismissal, return the cross, remove robes.

Now you are done.

Brian Ryder