**Altar Serving in St Francis’ Church Port Glasgow**

To be an altar server and help the Priest at Holy Mass is a very special privilege. We must always make sure that we know what we are doing before Mass starts and conduct ourselves in a prayerful and composed way. Anything that we do on the altar should always be done calmly and without any rush or hurry. Servers should never be a distraction to people at Mass. During preparations for Mass and after Mass anytime that Servers go out to the Altar or return from it they should genuflect to Christ in the Tabernacle.

The Senior Altar Server at Mass is in charge and gives out the different duties and jobs. We should take our jobs seriously and not complain about the task that we, or someone else, has been given.

Tasks before Mass begins:

1. Take the Cruets, which contain the water and wine, and the Ciborium, which holds the hosts, to the table in the porch for the Offertory Procession.

2. Place the Priest’s Chalice on the Credence Table (the table at the side), along with any other Chalices, Purificators, and the Finger Bowl and Towel.

3. Make sure that the Bells are on the top step in front of the Altar. They will remain there until Mass is finished.

4. Light the candles on the Altar about five minutes before Mass starts. The Senior Server should light the candles.

5. The Senior Server will tell each Server where they are to stand at the Altar: either with Father or the Side.

During Mass:

1. Look attentive, prayerful, and calm, with hands joined at all times.

2. Ring the Bell at the entrance to the Sacristy. This gives the people a chance to stand and the music to begin.

3. When the procession begins remember always to leave room in the middle at the Altar for the Priest to stand and all genuflect together.

4. First Book: this should always be the Senior Server as it means if there are any problems the Priest can speak easily to the Senior Server.

5. After the Creed and Bidding Prayers the two Servers chosen to do the Offertory Procession should go to the porch. As they leave the Altar they should turn and genuflect to the Tabernacle and process up the aisle.

6. Set up: this is done by one or two Servers: place the Priest’s Chalice and any other Chalices on the Altar at the right hand side. There is no need to remove the Tabernacle key or the Chalice Pall; simply place everything on the Altar neatly.

7. The two Servers who helped the Offertory Procession bring forward the water and wine to the Priest.

8. The same two Servers, or another two depending on numbers, bring over the Finger Bowl and Towel to the Priest.

9. As the Priest says “Pray brothers and sisters that my sacrifice and yours. . .” all Servers go to the front of the Altar and stand.

10. The Server on the bells should stand close to the bells to pick them up as everyone kneels.

The four bells are: as the Priest extends his hands over the Chalice and hosts; as the Priest elevates the Sacred Host; as the Priest elevates the Chalice; and as the Priest consumes the Precious Blood from the Chalice at Communion.

Leave the bells on the top step until after Mass.

11. Once Servers have received Holy Communion they should return to their places.

12. Second Book: this should be done by the Senior Server. If there are a large number of Servers and jobs have to be distributed, the next most senior Server should do the book.

13. All Servers leave the Altar together after the Final Blessing and stand at the steps. Remember to leave a space in the middle for the Priest to stand. All genuflect together and process up the aisle.

After Mass:

1. The candles should always be put out with the snuffer.

2. Bring the Chalices etc from the Credence Table to the Sacristy calmly and quietly.

3. Place the used Purificators and Finger Towel neatly in the basket.

4. Make sure that any leaflets are removed from the Altar and place the bells under the Altar.