

# **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church**

## **Altar Server Program Information**

### **December 2011**

#### **The Altar Servers**

This document contains general information about the altar server program at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton church. It is intended for boys and girls who may be interested in becoming an altar server, and for experienced servers who want a review of basic information.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish has about 40 altar servers. Many of them continue serving through high school. Boys and girls who wish to become an altar server must be at least in the fifth grade, attend Mass regularly, and attend a training program. Any boy or girl who was trained and has served in another parish is welcome to serve in this parish and should see Deacon Seibold to determine what, if any, additional training may be needed. There is often a waiting list of boys and girls interested in being an altar server.

Altar servers are scheduled for all Masses, Stations of the Cross, Benediction, and other special events. They will be assigned to one of three positions at the Masses. Server #1 has responsibility for the books used by the priest at Mass. Server #2 assists with the offertory procession and at the altar. Server #3 is the cross bearer. Servers can expect to be scheduled twice a month.

The altar server changing room is located to your right as you enter the church. Server vestments are stored there. There is also a bulletin board in the room with the current schedule and other notices. Servers should check the bulletin board each time they come into the church and make sure that all scheduled servers have arrived if it is close to Mass time. Altar servers should not wait to be asked if they are needed. Altar servers should also be willing to help each other by filling in for other servers who cannot be at their Mass.

#### **What Servers Wear**

Altar servers wear a white alb zipping down the front. Servers hang up their alb after using it and hang up any other albs found on the floor. Servers also wear a cincture (rope belt) tied around the waist. Cinctures come in four colors: white, red, green and purple. The color worn on any Sunday matches the color of the priest's vestments and church decorations. Cinctures are stored in plastic baskets on the shelves.

#### **Senior Servers**

Servers who have completed three years of service at Seton Parish are installed as senior servers. This is usually done at one of the Masses in October. Senior servers wear a wooden cross around their neck which announces their dedication to everyone in the church.

#### **Mass Scheduling**

All servers are assigned to one of the Mass teams for the Saturday and Sunday Masses. The most experienced servers have first choice. New servers will be assigned where they are needed. If another member of the server's family member is already a Eucharistic minister, lector, usher, altar server or musician, the family can request that they all be assigned to the same Mass. This exception is made only so families do not have to split up when attending Mass on the weekend. If this cannot be done because there

are no vacancies, prospective servers will be told before agreeing to participate in the training. Servers are assigned to all server positions for which they are qualified and will serve with all other servers on the team.

If there is a Mass team is so short of altar servers that the Masses cannot be adequately staffed, we will use altar servers from other Mass teams to fill in occasionally.

## **Communication**

Access to email and the internet is important for our altar servers since most business is handled this way. Scheduling is done for most of our ministries by computer. Servers can always look at their schedules, request vacation dates, and try to find substitutes using their Web Terminal on the internet. The Church will almost always communicate with altar servers by email. Altar servers without a computer, even temporarily, will need to check on assignments with another server or make special arrangements. There is a printed schedule on the Altar Servers' bulletin board. However, servers do substitute for others. The online schedule will always be accurate but the printed schedule may be outdated.

Servers who know in advance when they will be away can enter those dates themselves on the Web Terminal before the schedule is issued and will not be scheduled for those dates. Servers and their parents will be told how to do this. A roster with telephone and email information for all servers is available on the Web Terminal for help in looking for substitutes. Once a schedule is issued, servers who cannot be at an assigned Mass for any reason should find a replacement personally or by using the Web Terminal. For last minute problems, they are to notify Deacon Seibold. Servers who regularly miss assigned Masses without a reason may be dropped from the Mass team or the assignment schedule.

Servers must sign in for Mass because we may have no other way of knowing that they were there. When a server comes to Mass, he/she should check whether help is needed. An altar server should get ready to serve without being asked if a scheduled server is missing.

## **Appropriate Dress**

Alb zippers are to be fully closed and cinctures tied snugly. Servers should dress neatly at all times, wear clean clothes and decent shoes, and comb their hair. Dress sandals can be worn. Do not wear dirty sneakers, shoes with untied laces, flip-flops, any other beachware, or sweat shirts with hoods when serving. Socks must be worn with sneakers.

## **Notices**

Because electronic communication is so effective, there are very few general meetings for servers. If one is scheduled, it will be for an important reason and all servers must come. Announcements are sometimes sent with the serving schedule. Servers must look at each page received by email or mail to make sure that nothing important is missed.

## **Parish Clergy**

Servers should know by sight the pastor and deacon at our parish. Our pastor is Fr. Ed. Connelly. Learn who he is if you don't know! In addition we have several visiting priests who help us for Masses on weekends. Deacon Fred Seibold is the altar server coordinator and takes a special interest in all altar servers. He teaches the classes, does the scheduling, and sends all of the notices. If any server ever has a problem of any kind, Deacon Seibold is available for them.