

SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH INCENSE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALTAR SERVERS

The altar server who carries the censer and boat is called a thurifer. If you are chosen to be a thurifer, review these notes and try to remember the names of the two most important things: the censer and the boat. It is very easy to be a thurifer. These two pages should be enough for you to know what to do for most of the time. If something different will be done, there will be special instructions. Look at the photos below.



Censer (or Thurible)

The censer is carried by the thurifer with the right hand.



Boat (contains incense grains)

The boat is also carried by the thurifer with the left hand.



2 Pieces of Charcoal in the Censer

An usher will light the charcoal about 15 minutes before it will be used. Make sure this has been done!



Holding the Censer

Put your thumb through the ring and grab the chain. Do not wrap the chain around your hand.

Processions:

Most of the time that incense is used, it will be carried in a procession. Remember that in all processions, the thurifer leads the way even when there is a processional cross. Do not bow or genuflect, and stay near the priest until he takes the censer.

Carrying the Censer:

You carry the censer with your right hand. Put your thumb through the ring at the end of the chain and grab the chain with the same hand. Do not wrap the chain around your hand because this makes it difficult to give the censer to the priest.

When Incense is used at the beginning of the Mass, who does what?

When the censer and boat are needed at the beginning of the Mass, they are carried by the #2 altar server leading the Entrance Procession. The incensing is usually used from the floor. Altar server #3 will carry the processional cross and server #1 will get the binder. All you have to remember is to stick with the priest!

When Incense is used at the Offertory, who does what?

The censer is used at this time of the Mass so that the priest can bless the gifts carried in the Offertory Procession. The censer and boat are carried by the #3 altar server leading the Offertory Procession (no one carries the processional cross). Altar servers #1 and #2 will receive the gifts. All you have to remember is to stick with the priest! When he goes to the altar, you go also and stand just a little behind him until he comes to you.

Now the priest is coming to you for the incense. What do you do?

This is easy and it is the same every time no matter when the incensing is done during the Mass.

1. Stay near the priest until he comes to you.
2. First give him the boat. With your free left hand, grab the chain near the censer and raise it.
3. The priest will spoon incense grains into the censer through the big holes in the lid. When he is finished...
4. Lower the censer. Your left hand is again free. Now you trade!!! You take the boat back from the priest, and he takes the censer from you (the chain must not be wrapped around your right hand)
5. Now you stay where you are while the priest goes where he wants to do the incensing. When the priest is finished, he will return to you and give the censer back to you. He is done! Take the censer and boat down the aisle and give them to an usher. Return to serving the Mass in the normal way. You are done!