

# YOUTH ALTAR SERVER QUALIFICATIONS

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>USCCB</b>	=	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
<b>BISHOP</b>	=	Bishop Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C. Bishop of Peoria
<b>PASTOR</b>	=	Fr. Eugene Radosevich, Pastor of St. Luke, Eureka, IL

### I. USCCB QUALIFICATIONS

**USCCB:** The determination that women and girls may function as servers in the liturgy should be made by the bishop on the diocesan level so that there might be a uniform diocesan policy.<sup>i</sup>

**USCCB:** Men and women, boys and girls may be altar servers.<sup>ii</sup>

**USCCB:** Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. They should have already received Holy Communion for the first time and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.<sup>iii</sup>

### II. BISHOP'S QUALIFICATIONS

**BISHOP:** The Bishop of Peoria has said that altar servers may be male or female.<sup>iv</sup>

### III. PASTOR'S QUALIFICATIONS

**PASTOR:** All youth boys and girls of the parish (i.e., Third graders through Seniors in High School) who are Catholic in good standing will be considered eligible to be trained as a Youth Altar Server.

**PASTOR:** To be a "Catholic in good standing" means: (1) that he/she believes all that the Catholic Church believes, teaches, and professes to be true, especially in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist; (2) that he/she is known by the pastor to be a Catholic who has received their First Holy Communion; and (3) regularly practices his/her Catholic faith by regularly receiving the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

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## END NOTES

i **UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS GUIDELINES FOR ALTAR SERVERS**

The following guidelines were prepared by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy and presented to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for discussion at the June 1994 Special Assembly on Thursday, June 16, 1994. The suggested guidelines may be used as a basis for developing diocesan guidelines.

1. Although institution into the ministry of acolyte is reserved to lay men, the diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. Such persons may carry out all the functions listed in no. 100 and nos. 189-193 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. The determination that women and girls may function as servers in the liturgy should be made by the bishop on the diocesan level so that there might be a uniform diocesan policy.
2. No distinction should be made between the functions carried out in the sanctuary by men and boys and those carried out by women and girls. The term "altar boys" should be replaced by "servers". The term "server" should be used for those who carry out the functions of the instituted acolyte.
3. Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. They should have already received holy communion for the first time and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.
4. Servers should receive proper formation before they begin to function. The formation should include (1) instruction on the Mass; (2) and its parts; (3) and their meaning; (4) the various objects used in the liturgy (their names and use), (5) and the various functions of the server during the Mass and other liturgical celebrations. (6) Servers should also receive appropriate guidance on maintaining proper decorum and attire when serving Mass and other functions. [Numbering added for emphasis]
5. Since the role of server is integral to the normal celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest. On Sundays and other more important occasions, two or more servers should be employed to carry out the various functions normally entrusted to these ministers.
6. Servers should normally be vested. This is within the tradition of the Church and prevents difficulties regarding appropriate dress for these ministers. All servers should wear the same liturgical vesture.<sup>1</sup>
7. Servers: (1) carry the cross; (2) the processional candles; (3) hold the book for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar; (4) carry the incense and censer; (5) present the bread, wine, and water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people; (6) wash the hands of the priest; (7) assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary. (8) When appropriate, a server may also ring a bell as a signal to the faithful. [Numbering added for emphasis]
8. Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation. They also join in singing the hymns and other chants of the liturgy.
9. Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the priest celebrant and deacon. The place next to the priest is normally reserved for the deacon.
10. Servers may not distribute Holy Communion unless they have been mandated for this function by the bishop.
11. The Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians, and Ushers (Book of Blessings, nos. 1847-1870) may be used before servers first begin to function in this ministry.

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ii See the above reference to **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Guidelines For Altar Servers #1.**

iii See the above reference to **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Guidelines For Altar Servers #3.**

iv **STATUTES OF THE DIOCESE OF PEORIA (March 2009) SECTION 6.2.4:** Altar servers may be male or female. Boys may wear cassock and surplice, alb, or altar robe. Girls should vest in alb or altar robe, but never in cassock and surplice.