**Altar Server—Definition of Terms**

ALB—the long white liturgical garment worn over street clothing common to all the baptized.

ALTAR—the main focus of the church on which the sacrifice of the Lord is offered and from which we receive his Body and Blood in the Eucharist. The altar is treated with great reverence because it represents Christ.

ALTAR CLOTH—the fabric that covers the altar. Some churches will have altar cloths of different liturgical colors, but the top-most altar cloth must always be white.

AMBO/LECTURN/PULPIT—the sacred space from which the word of God is proclaimed. It is reserved for the readings, the psalm and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet). It may also be used for the homily and the intercessions.

AMBRY—the shelf or case, located near the baptismal font, that contains the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens and the Sacred Chrism

ASPERGILLUM—the instrument used to sprinkle holy water, sometimes taking the form of a live branch

BOAT— The vessel that holds the grains of incense and usually includes a spoon.

BOOK OF THE GOSPELS—a separate book from the Lectionary that contains the Gospel readings used at Mass and is carried in procession at Mass.

CASSOCK—the long black garment with buttons down the front worn with the surplice.

CHALICE—also referred to as the cup, is used to hold the consecrated wine of the Eucharist (the Blood of Christ).

CIBORIUM—a metal container (usually having a cover) used to hold the consecrated hosts. It has a variety of forms from a bowl shape to a goblet-like appearance similar to the chalice. (*plural*—ciboria)

CORPORAL—a square, white linen cloth unfolded on the altar on which the paten, ciboria and chalice(s) are placed during Mass. Also used in front of the tabernacle and under the monstrance during Eucharistic Exposition.

CREDENCE TABLE--A small table or shelf in the wall at one side of the altar. On it are usually placed the cruets, basin, and finger towel. The chalice (or cups), corporals, purificators, and extra ciboria for the Mass may also be placed there.

CRUET--One of two small bottles or vessels to contain the water and wine used at Mass.

EUCHARIST—comes from a Greek word meaning “to give thanks”. Another name for the Mass or the consecrated bread and wine.

FONT—can refer to the Baptismal Font or the vessels that contain holy water located by the doors of the church. The faithful will dip their hands into the font to bless themselves as a reminder of their baptism.

HUMERAL VEIL—the long cloth that is draped over the shoulders and arms of the priest or deacon when giving the blessing or carrying the Blessed Sacrament. It is usually used during Benediction.

HOST—the round wafer that becomes the consecrated bread of the Eucharist (the Body of Christ).

LAVABO—the pitcher of water and bowl used to wash the priest’s hands during Mass.

LECTIONARY—a series of books containing the Scripture passages for the First Reading, Responsorial Psalm and Second Reading used at Mass.

LUNA—the round glass case in which a consecrated host is kept so that it can be placed into the monstrance for Eucharistic Exposition.

MONSTRANCE—a vessel used to display the consecrated host for Eucharistic Adoration.

OFFERTORY TABLE/GIFTS TABLE—the small table, usually in the back or main body of the church, on which the gifts of bread and wine are placed for Mass. At the Preparation of the Gifts, members of the assembly come to this table to bring the gifts to the presider for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

PALL—refers either to the square shaped fabric covered “card” that is placed on top of the chalice or to the large white cloth that is draped over the casket at a funeral as a reminder of baptism

PASCHAL CANDLE—the large, usually decorated candle whose fire is blessed at the Easter Vigil. Symbolic of the Risen Christ overcoming the darkness of sin and death, this candle is placed next to the ambo from Easter until Pentecost and then kept by the baptismal font. For funerals, this candle is placed at the front of the casket.

PATEN—a saucer like dish that holds the round wafer that becomes the consecrated bread of the Eucharist (the Body of Christ). May appear similar to bowl-like ciboria but not as deep.

PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR—this is the chair from which the priest presides over the Mass.

PURIFICATOR--a small piece of white linen, usually marked with a cross in the center, used to wipe the lip of the chalice or cups during the distribution of the Precious Blood.

PYX--any metal box or vessel used to carry hosts on visitation to the homebound, hospitals, nursing homes or prisons.

ROMAN MISSAL—the big red liturgical book that contains all of the prayers used at Mass.

SACRARIUM—a special sink in the sacristy with pipes that drain directly into the ground

SACRISTAN—a person who handles the preparations of vessels, linens, books, and other liturgical items before Mass. He or she may oversee the attendance of all liturgical ministers scheduled and may also communicate any special notices or instructions to these ministers before Mass.

SANCTUARY LAMP—sometimes called the *Presence Candle*, this indicates the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

SURPLICE—a variation of the alb and symbolic of baptism, this short white garment is worn over the cassock.

TABERNACLE--A cupboard or boxlike receptacle, usually locked, for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. A lit sanctuary lamp is usually located nearby indicating that the Blessed Sacrament is reserved inside.

TAPER—either a thin candle or a long wax-covered wick used in a church candle lighter

THURIBLE—the vessel with a long chain(s) used to burn incense at Mass. The altar server responsible for handling the thurible is called a *thurifer*.