

**Diocese of San Diego**

**POLICY ON THE LITURGICAL MINISTRY OF SERVER**

Women and men, and girls and boys, may be chosen to function in the liturgical ministry of server.

**Name:** They should be called liturgical servers, altar servers, or just servers, but not acolytes, who require formal institution.

**Role:** The responsibilities of servers include thurifer, cross and candle bearers, and assistance to the priest celebrant or deacon with the Roman Missal, wine and water.

Servers should not exercise another liturgical ministry within the same Mass in which they serve.

**Age:** Ideally, as with readers and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, servers should have received the three sacraments of initiation and be good Catholics.

However, young people who have not yet been confirmed, but judged capable, may function as servers.

**Sensitivity:** In the selection of servers, there should be cultural sensitivity as well as gender-inclusive sensitivity, and women and girls should not be chosen to exclude men and boys.

**Attire:** Attire for servers, both adults and young people, should be dress clothing and shoes, over which a simple alb, the basic liturgical vesture, may be worn (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 336 and 339). If vested, they should all be dressed in the same way.

Ideally, servers should not wear cassocks and surplices, which is the dress of acolytes, or attire similar to that worn by monks.

**Seats:** Servers should have seats in a place from which they can easily perform their role, but not flanking the priest celebrant.

**Preparation:** Those invited to the liturgical ministry of server should be carefully prepared to exercise their role reverently and well.

**Blessing:** 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.

**Families:** Priests and liturgy committees might consider mothers and fathers with their sons and daughters functioning within the same liturgy.