

Handbook for Junior Altar Ministers



This book belongs to

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Junior Altar Ministers Handbook
Archdiocese of Perth Liturgical Guidelines
2023 Edition

Published by
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Who can be a Junior Altar Minister?

In the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth those who can be Junior Altar Ministers are to be baptised Catholic girls or boys, seven years or older. It is usual that the child has received their first Holy Communion.



Role of a Junior Altar Minister

The altar ministers both Senior and Junior assist the Priest throughout the liturgy. Their service enables the Priest and the congregation to celebrate the Eucharist in a prayerful manner.

The church documents tell us what to do, when to do it and how to do it. They are our guide in all that we do.

Altar Ministers are Reverent!

What a Junior Altar Minister needs to know

- + How to make the sign of the cross.
- + How to genuflect
- + The Order of the Mass
- + The language of the liturgy
- + When to kneel, stand and sit.
- + The books used
- + Items used for the Mass
- + The areas and the furniture of the church.



How to be a Reverent and Responsible Altar Minister

When in procession walk in time with other Altar Ministers.

Use both hands when carrying things.

When on the sanctuary sit up straight with your hands on your knees.

Once Mass has commenced, bow to the Altar (bending from the waist) slowly and carefully when walking onto the sanctuary or when passing the altar. Bowing the head is sufficient if you are holding something .

Pay attention to the Order of Mass, join in singing the songs and saying the prayers and responses.

Treat all people and all things with respect.

How to be a Reverent and Responsible Altar Minister

Come early; at least 15 minutes before Mass begins.

Be willing to listen, to serve and to take on responsibility.

Contact another Minister if you are not able to be present for your roster.

Vesting - how you present yourself is very important:

- Hair groomed
- Alb neat and tidy
- Clothes and shoes appropriate (what is worn under the alb can be seen).

Be confident in what to do and when to do it.

If you need assistance or unsure of something during Mass, ask someone in a quiet voice.

Help others when needed.

Hang up your alb neatly when Mass is finished.

Alert the coordinator if the alb requires cleaning or needs repair.

Safety First: Tie back your hair; you may be a candle bearer

Altar Ministers are Responsible!

Notes

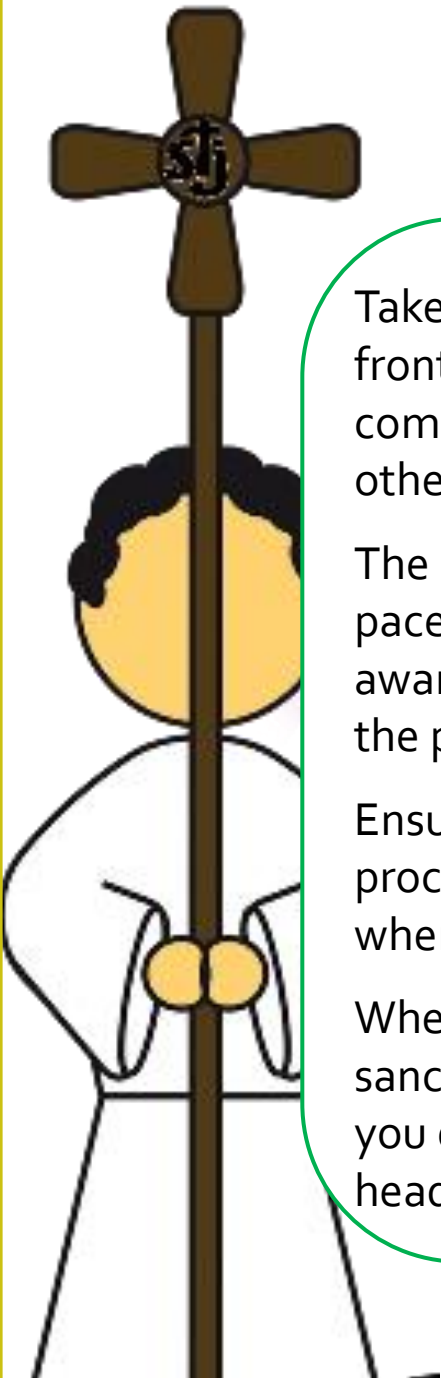


Preparation before Mass

The Cross Bearer



The Cross can be heavy if you carry it for a long time!



Take up your position with the cross at the front of the procession where it commences and wait patiently for the other ministers to join you.

The minister carrying the cross sets the pace for the Entrance Procession, so be aware of who is in the procession and set the pace accordingly.

Ensure you understand **when** to start the procession and **where** to place the cross when you arrive on the sanctuary.

When the procession arrives at the sanctuary, as you are carrying something, you do not need to bow. You nod your head in reverence.

Preparation before Mass

The Candle Bearers



Protect the Candle Flame!

Know where to place the candles on the sanctuary.

Hold the candles upright. Be aware of melted wax dripping down.

If the candles blow out whilst in procession calmly light them again when they are in place on the sanctuary.

As you are carrying something you do not need to bow or genuflect, you nod your head in reverence.



SAFETY FIRST

Do not hold the candle too close to your body.
Do not play with the candle flame.

Preparation before Mass

The Book Bearer

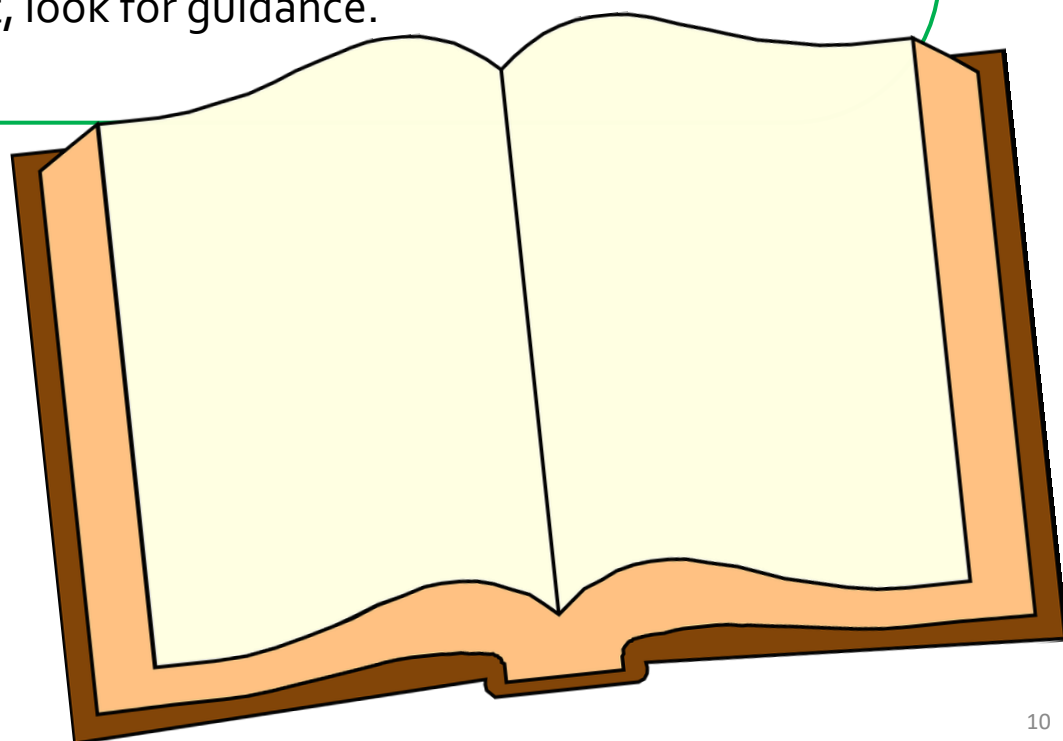
The minister holds the book (The book of the Chair/Roman Missal), for the Priest when the Priest is not at the Altar.

Sometimes you will have to hold a folder instead of the Roman Missal

The book should be held steadily with both hands and held at chest height.

It should be raised to suit the Priest's height and sight range. The Priest will guide you.

If you feel unsure when to take the book to the Priest, look for guidance.



Order of the Mass

The Mass is a single act of worship that has four parts.

Explore The Mass!

www.togetheratonealtar.catholic.edu.au

Currently displaying Years 7 - 10 ▾

This tab can be changed to suit your current school year.

Currently displaying Years 7 - 10 ▾

Together At One Altar

Explore

Craft

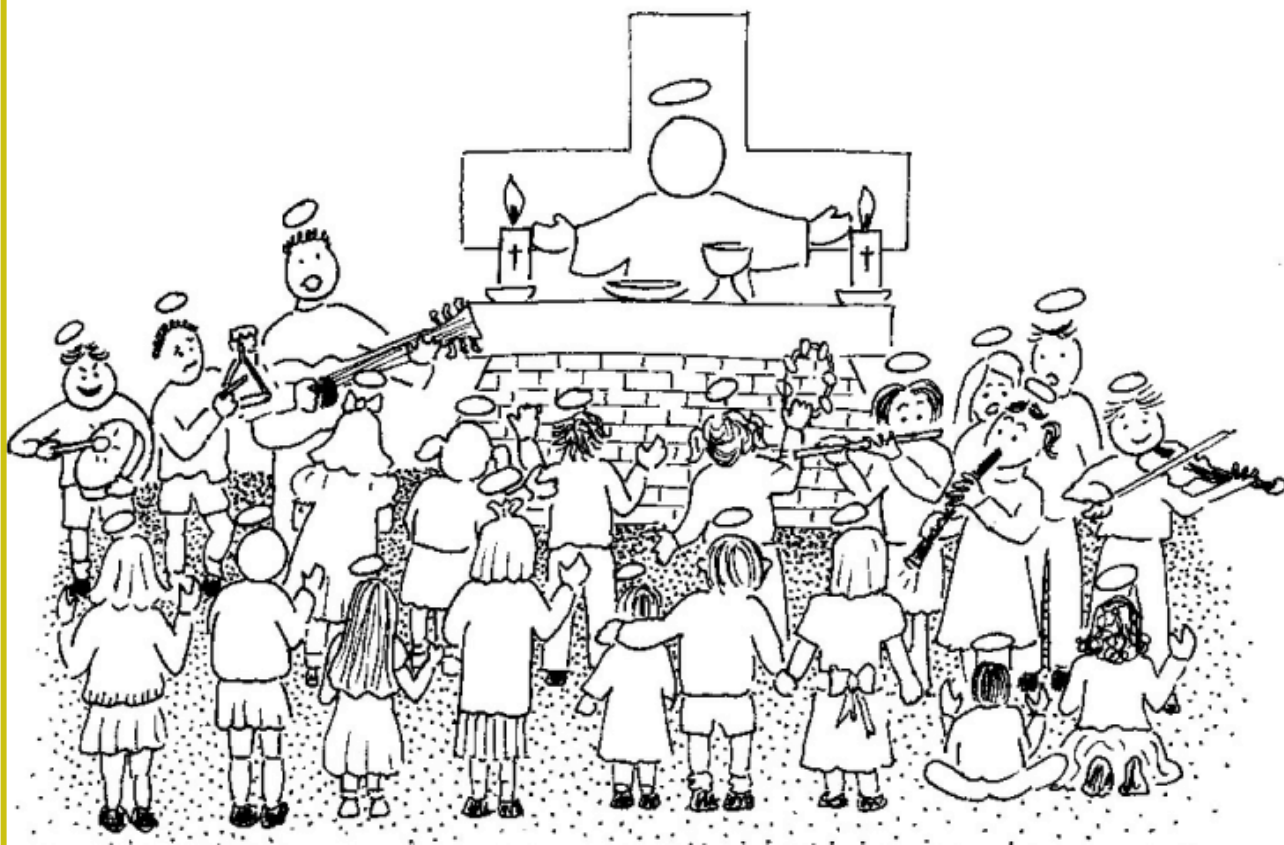
Receive

Live

Press the tab 'Receive' to explore the parts of the Mass.

www.togetheratonealtar.catholic.edu.au

A group of people who are celebrating!
Colour them in if you like!



Order of the Mass and the Role of a Minister

Introductory Rite

Entrance Procession

Order of Procession

Cross Bearer

Leads the procession.
Slow and deliberate pace.
Hold the Cross high.

Candle Bearers

Candles lit.
Hold candle upright
Walk together.

Other Altar Ministers

Deacon / Proclaimer of the Word

Carries the book of the Gospels.

Priest



The ministers who are carrying something do not bow but reverence the Altar with a nod of the head.

Order of the Mass and the Role of a Minister

Introductory Rite

Entrance Procession

On Reaching the Sanctuary

Cross Bearer

Bow head.

Place the cross in delegated position.

Proceed to their places.

Candle Bearers

Bow heads.

Place candles in delegated positions.

Proceed to their places.

Other Altar Ministers

Genuflect.

Proceed to their places.



The ministers who are carrying something do not bow but reverence the Altar with a nod of the head.

Order of the Mass and the Role of a Minister

Introductory Rite

Greeting

Join in the prayer

Penitential Rite

Join in the prayer.

Gloria

Join in the prayer

Not sung/said in the seasons of Advent or Lent.

After the Gloria

The Minister who is delegated should take the Roman Missal/ Book of the Chair opened at the correct page to the Priest when he says; “*Let us pray*”.

Opening Prayer

Return to your position with the Book at the end of the prayer.



Hands on knees when seated

Order of the Mass and the Role of a Minister

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Listen and respond.

Second Reading

Listen and respond.

Just before the Gospel Acclamation

The two candle bearers take the candles and all process to the ambo. Ministers stand either side of the Priest or Deacon whilst he proclaims the Gospel.

Gospel Acclamation

Join in the prayer

Gospel

When the Gospel is finished being proclaimed the candle bearers process in the reverse manner.

Homily

Profession of Faith

Join in the Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Listen and respond to the prayers.

Order of the Mass and the Role of a Minister

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts

Two Altar Ministers process to the place where the gifts of bread and wine have been arranged before Mass.

The ministers lead the people who are presenting the gifts to the Priest.

Altar Ministers may also be required to assist the Priest with the reception of the bread and wine.

Preparation of the Gifts

After the Priest recites the prayers over the bread and the wine an Altar Minister with the towel over their forearm, holds the bowl, whilst another Altar Minister pours the water over the Priest's hands.

The Priest wipes his hands with the towel.

Once the ritual action of the washing of the hands has taken place, the bowl and towel are returned to the credence table.



Order of the Mass and the Role of a Minister

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Prayer over the Offerings

The Eucharistic Prayer

Listen and respond.

The Lord's Prayer

Join in the prayer.

The Rite of Peace

Offer peace to those people immediately around you as is the custom in your parish.

Lamb of God

Join in the prayer.

Communion

Altar Ministers join the procession to receive Holy Communion. After receiving Communion take time to quietly pray in thanksgiving.

After the congregation has received Communion and a time of silence has been observed, the book bearer presents the Roman Missal/ Book of the Chair to the Priest for the Prayer after Communion.

Prayer after Communion

The book bearer returns to their seat.

Order of the Mass and the Role of a Minister

The Concluding Rite

Announcements

Final Blessing

An Altar Minister may be required to hold the Roman Missal/Book of the Chair for the Priest if there is a special blessing to be read.

The Dismissal

The Recessional Procession

- The Cross Bearer leads the procession out of the Church.
- The Priest will join the procession facing the Altar and will turn to leave when ready. All ministers follow on and process to the sacristy.
- Altar Ministers may be asked to assist in tidying areas of the church.

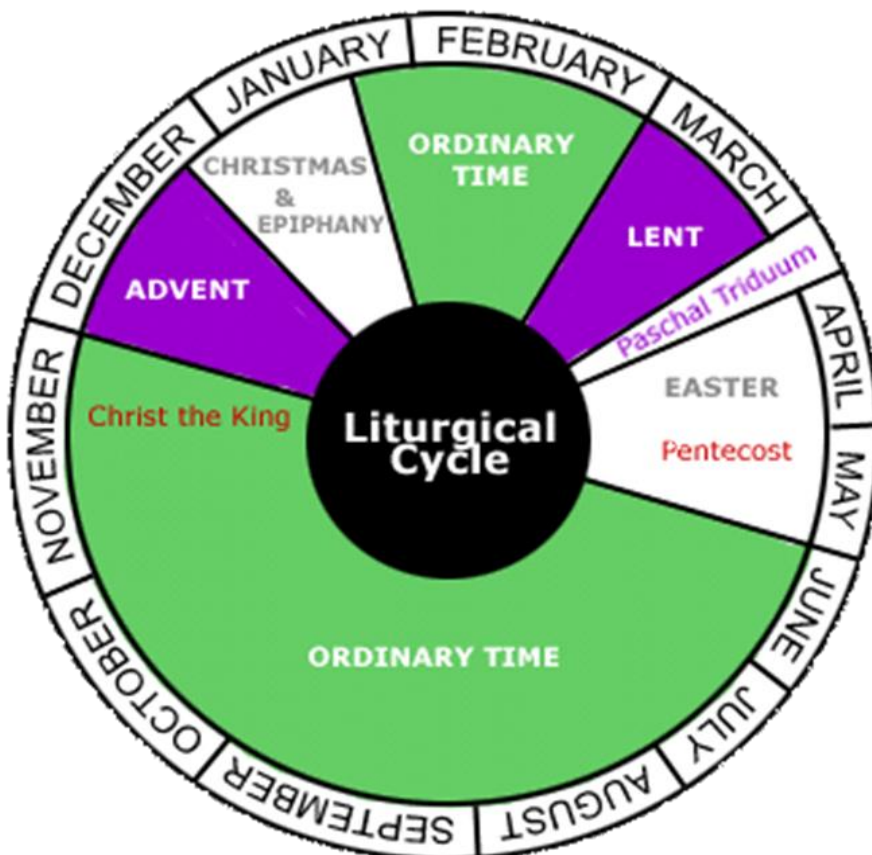
The Liturgical Year

The liturgical cycle of the seasons of the Church

The Church's Liturgical Year begins with the First Sunday of Advent, four Sundays before Christmas. That means the beginning of the year will be the end of November or beginning of December.



That seems strange as a year commences in January! A liturgical year is different; it starts with the 1st Sunday of Advent.



An annual liturgical calendar is available to download
www.liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au

The Seasons of the Liturgical Year

Advent is a time of joyful waiting; we look back to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and we look forward to his coming again at the end of time.

Christmas celebrates the coming of Christ into the world – the Son of God, Jesus, became man and lived among us.

Ordinary Time – the first period of Ordinary Time fits between the Christmas Season and Lent. We explore more deeply the life of Jesus and reflect on his message of life, justice, love and peace.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days, from Ash Wednesday to the beginning of Mass on Holy Thursday.

The Easter Triduum (one feast, three days) begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and concludes with Evening Prayer on Sunday of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday).

The Easter Season lasts for 50 days after the Mass of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday) and culminates on the feast of Pentecost Sunday.

The second period of **Ordinary Time** stretches from Pentecost to the feast of Christ the King and a new liturgical cycle begins again with **Advent**.

When we are in **Year A, B or C** that means we are hearing scripture from different Gospels - **Year A Matthew/ Year B Mark / Year C Luke**. The evangelist John's book being heard on feast days throughout all the years and especially on Good Friday.

Colours used in a Liturgical Year



The colour of the priest's liturgical vestments changes from time to time. This is because the Church uses different colours to indicate the season or feast that is being celebrated.

The liturgical colours used are:

WHITE OR GOLD

White or gold, since they are festive, joyful colours, are used during the Christmas and Easter seasons, and on major feast days.



PURPLE

Purple (or violet) symbolises repentance and penance. Vestments of purple or violet are used during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Lent is the season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It is a quiet season of reflection. The colour of Advent is more of a rose-purple, like the sky just before sunrise.



GREEN

Green is a sign of life in nature and as such it represents growth, life and hope. Green is the colour worn most often during liturgies in Ordinary Time. It symbolises the graces that draw people into the life of God. Most of the Church's year is Ordinary Time.



RED

Red symbolises both blood and fire. It is the colour that is used on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost Sunday, and for celebrations of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is also the colour that has traditionally been associated with martyrs – those who have shed their blood for their faith – and so it is worn on the feast days of martyrs.

ROSE PINK

Rose pink is an optional colour that may be used on the Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday of Lent. On both days, the Entrance Antiphon calls us to rejoice, so the pink vestments mark a softening of the penitential tone of the season.

<https://www.togetheratonealtar.catholic.edu.au/craft/liturgical-colours-and-seasons/>



What are Holy Days of Obligation?

Along with Sundays, December 25th, Christmas Day and August 15th Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary are days when we **MUST** attend Mass. These are called Holy Days of Obligation.

Symbols used in Liturgy

The symbols we use in liturgy are also found in our homes and we are familiar with them. These familiar things communicate with us in a different way; in a symbolic way, a way without words. Because the symbols are used in our daily lives, they draw out how we feel about them.

For example, water is not just water that we drink or wash ourselves in, it has potential to make us clean and refreshed; it can change the way we feel. It can be cool and inviting or warm and comforting.

These everyday experiences of water evoke feelings and memories in our lives of the times we have used water.

A symbol can give us a glimpse of something far beyond what the symbol is: it can tell us something beyond words.



All our senses; hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, smelling are used in liturgy.

Symbols used in Liturgy

Oil

We cook with oil; it makes a car or machinery run smoothly. In liturgy we are anointed with holy oil at baptism or when we are sick; we are strengthened.



Bread

Bread is a staple food in many countries. Bread was broken at the last supper.

Wine

Wine is made from grapes. We celebrate our birthdays and the milestones of our lives eating and drinking together.



In the celebration of Eucharist, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. Those who share the Body and Blood of Christ at the Lord's table become the Body of Christ in the world called to bring the love of Christ to others.

Symbols used in Liturgy

Light

We light a fire to get warm or to cook something and candles light up the darkness. We feel different when we experience the light. At Easter we proclaim the light of Christ!



Incense

Incense is used to create fragrant smoke. The smoke symbolises our prayers rising up to God.

Important Church Books

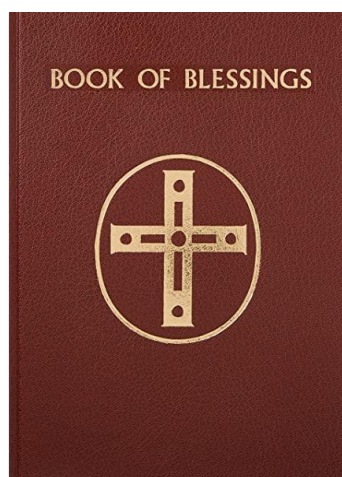
The Roman Missal

This book has the text and rubrics for most liturgies. The red text, or the rubrics is the special rules on how and when to do things.



Book of the Chair [Excerpts from the Roman Missal]

Contains all the prayers that the celebrant prays from the Chair.



The Book of Blessings

Father will refer to this book to find the suitable prayers for a blessing. It is usually kept in the sacristy.

The Ordo

This book is found in the sacristy. It tells the priest what readings to use and what the liturgical colour is for each day of the liturgical year.



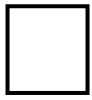
The Parts of the Church

Churches vary in their features and design.
All churches are planned with these basic parts.

Explore your Church to find the following:

- Narthex**- people enter the church through the narthex. There are notices and sometimes a piety stall (a place selling rosary beads, holy cards, books etc.) is situated there. The narthex's purpose is to provide a transitioning space to move from the outside busy world into a quiet, peaceful sacred space.
- The Nave** is the main body of the church where the seats or pews for the people are. It usually has very high ceilings.
- The Sanctuary** - this is an elevated place where the Altar, Ambo and Priest's chair are located.
- The Baptismal Fount** is where adults and babies are baptised. Near the fount there will be a display cupboard that hold the holy oils. This is called the **Ambry**. A key to the ambry is kept in the sacristy.
- The Tabernacle** a place where the Body of Christ is kept so it is available for those who are sick.

The Parts of the Church



Processional Cross - this may be a crucifix or a plain cross. It is carried in the Entrance Procession.



Crucifix - a cross with an image of Jesus on it.



Shrines are small niches that hold images or statues of saints. They are different in each church.



Sacristy there are usually several sacristies. One is where the priest robes and where the vestments are kept. Another is where the robes of Altar Ministers are kept, and another is where the flowers are arranged. Sacred vessels are stored in one of these sacristies.

Glossary

ALB: Long white garment worn by Priests, Deacons, Acolytes and Altar Ministers.

CHASUBLE: The outer colored garment worn by the Priest.

CINCTURE: Cord worn around the waist.

CORPORAL: A cloth placed on the altar on which the chalice and paten are placed.

CROSIER: A staff carried by the Bishop. This looks like a shepherd's crook.

FUNERAL PALL: A large white cloth that covers a coffin.

HAND TOWEL: A towel used to dry the hands of the Priest.

MITRE: A pointed hat worn by the Bishop.

PURIFICATOR/ PURIFIER : A small cloth used to wipe the rim of the Chalice during Communion.

STOLE: A thin strip of material coloured to match the liturgical season worn by the Priest over the Alb.



CHASUBLES



ALB

STOLE

Glossary

ACOLYTE: A lay person who assists the Priest in liturgies.

DEACON: An ordained Minister who assists the Priest at the Liturgy of the Word and at the Altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

BOOK OF GOSPELS: A special book just of the Gospels usually processed in and held high by a Deacon or Proclaimer.

GENUFLECTION: Lowering yourself on to one knee out of respect for the presence of Christ.

HOLY OILS: Oil of Chrism, Oil of the Sick, Oil of Catechumens.

HOMILY: The speech that the Bishop, Priest or Deacon gives after the scripture readings are proclaimed. These words help the people to understand and live the words of scripture.

LECTIONARY: a set of books containing readings of the Bible for every day of the liturgical year.

PROFOUND BOW: A bow made with the body from the waist.

THE ROMAN MISSAL: The book used during Mass from which the Priest takes the prayers.



Glossary

ASPERGES: The Rite for the sprinkling of Holy Water.

ASPERGILLUM: The item used to sprinkle Holy Water .

BOAT: A small container that holds extra unburnt incense.

CHALICE: A particular cup used to hold the Precious Blood.

CIBORIUM: A covered container containing Consecrated bread (the Body of Christ).

CRUETS: Containers for the wine and water.

HOLY WATER BUCKET: Vessel holding the Holy Water.

MONSTRANCE: An ornate vessel that holds the Blessed Sacrament and is used as the focus for the devotion of Adoration.

PATEN: A small metal plate that is used by the Priest to hold the host.

PYX: A small container that holds the Blessed Sacrament which a minister takes to those who are ill and cannot come to Mass.

THURIBLE: A vessel in which incense is burned, usually made of metal with a long chain or chains.

THURIFER: The person who carries the thurible.

THURIBLE



BOAT



HOLY WATER BUCKET

Glossary

AMBO: The place where the scriptures are read from.

CREDENCE TABLE: A table in the sanctuary where the items required for Mass are placed.

HOLY WATER FOUNT: A container that is placed at the entrance to the church. The people bless themselves from it. In some Churches this will be the Baptismal Fount.

OFFERTORY TABLE: A small table on which the gifts of bread and wine are placed before Mass commences.

PROCESSIONAL CROSS: A crucifix or plain cross carried in Procession.

SANCTUARY LAMP: A light that remains lit alerting all to the presence of Christ in the tabernacle.

TABERNACLE: The place where the Body of Christ is kept. They look different in each church.



Tabernacle
with
Sanctuary
Lamp

Keeping Children Safe in our Community

Safeguarding Office

29 Victoria Square, Perth WA 6000

Telephone: 9221 7762

Email: safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au

Website: safeguarding.perthcatholic.org.au



Safeguarding Officers in your Parish

There is a poster in the Narthex of the Church with the photos, names and contact details of the Safeguarding officers in your Parish.

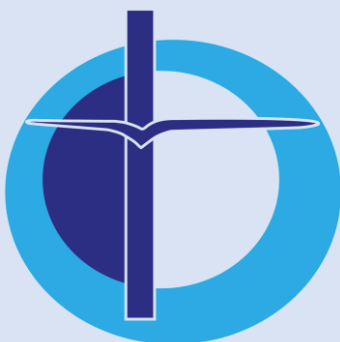
The Archdiocese of Perth is the first of Australia's Catholic dioceses to begin to establish Safeguarding Officers across its network of parishes.

The Safeguarding Office is responsible for ensuring the safety of children, young people and the vulnerable within the confines of the Catholic Church across the Archdiocese of Perth, educating the Catholic community on child protection and protective behaviours, and establishing Safeguarding Officers within Perth's metropolitan and rural parishes.

References made to The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) are taken from the Final Text With Application for Australia, 2012

Electronically available from

<https://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/media/1454/girm-2012-for-australia.pdf>



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