

# ALTAR SERVER GUIDELINES



Immaculate Conception Church  
Tuckahoe, NY

# PREPARATION FOR MASS

## *While at Home*

### **BOYS:**

Dress pants  
Black, brown, or tan shoes  
Polo or dress shirt  
Neat hair

### **GIRLS:**

Dress pants, dress, or knee-length skirt  
Black, white, or brown **closed-toe** shoes  
No high heels  
*Neutral* nail polish permitted; nothing bright that will stand out  
Hair pinned-up or tied behind shoulders

**Even when not assigned, servers should be “dressed to serve” at all church liturgies.**

# PREPARATION FOR MASS

## *In the Sacristy*

Arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of Mass.

Servers should be in place at the main aisle several minutes before the Entrance Procession begins.

Tell the Sacristan your name so that he can sign you in and mention if you are covering for someone else.

## *What to Wear*

### **BOYS:**

Grades 5 through 7: Black Cassock  
Grades 8 through HS: Purple Cassock  
Cassock falls no more than 2 inches above top of shoes.  
White surplice falls below your waistline.

### **GIRLS:**

Grades 5 through 7: Black scapular  
Grades 8 through HS: Purple scapular  
White alb falls no more than 2 inches above top of shoes.  
Scapular falls below your waistline.  
White cincture tied under scapular.

# BEHAVIOR DURING MASS

You have a **special role to help others pray** from the time that you enter church until you leave.

Remember that the manner in which you come dressed to church and the altar server uniforms you wear draw attention to yourselves and people see all that you do.

### **Demeanor**

- Sit up straight and proper, hands on lap
- Stand tall with both feet on the floor, not the kneeler
- Keep your back straight when kneeling
- Walk slowly and in-line with other servers
- Never speak in the Sanctuary unless necessary
- Only leave the Sanctuary in an emergency

### **You have two goals:**

- Assist the Priest with **what you do**
- Help people pray by **how you conduct yourself**

# ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Three or More Servers • See Diagram on next page

## CROSS BEARER

1. Should be the tallest server.
2. Line up at the 4<sup>th</sup> pew.
3. Set a **slow walking pace** for the Entrance Procession.
4. Always carry the cross straight up, never tilting to one side.
5. Lift the cross as high as you are comfortable.
6. Begin the procession when the **first words of the entrance hymn are sung**.
7. Stop and offer a head-bow before the steps of the Sanctuary.
8. Walk up the steps of the Sanctuary and follow the Acolyte around the **right-side** of the Low Altar.
9. Return to the center along the green marble and offer another head-bow to the Tabernacle.
10. Walk around the **right-side** of the High Altar and place the cross in its stand behind the Rerados.
11. Stand at the pew to the **left-side** of the Tabernacle.

## ACOLYTES (Candle Bearers)

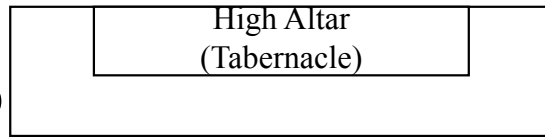
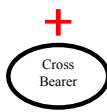
1. Stand on either side of the Cross Bearer.
2. Line up at the 4<sup>th</sup> pew.
3. Make sure the candles are equal in height.
4. Always carry the candle straight, never tilting it or swaying.
5. At the start of Mass, walk slowly and evenly with the Cross Bearer when the first words of the entrance hymn are sung.
6. Stop and offer a head-bow before the steps of the Sanctuary.
7. Walk up the steps of the Sanctuary and the Acolyte on the right-side of the Cross Bearer turns to the right and leads the procession around the right-side of the Low Altar.
8. Return to the center along the green marble and offer another head-bow to the Tabernacle.
9. Both Acolytes turn to the right and place their candles on the right-side of the Sanctuary against the wall and away from the air-conditioning vents.
10. Stand together at the pew to the right-side of the Tabernacle.



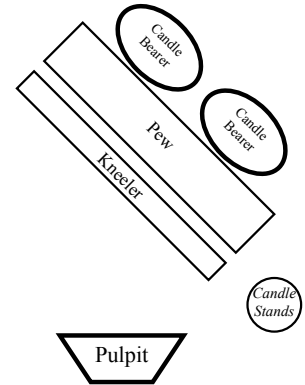
# ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Three or More Servers • See Instructions on previous page

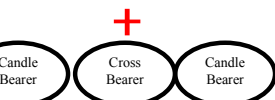
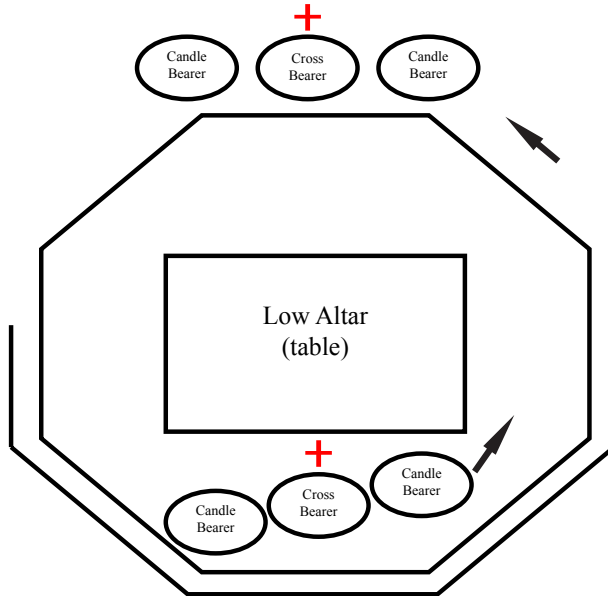
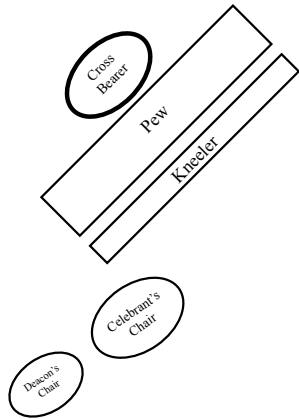
*Cross Bearer walks behind the high altar and places cross in stand. Then sits in pew on this side.*



*Candle Bearers place candles in stands. Then sit in pew on this side.*



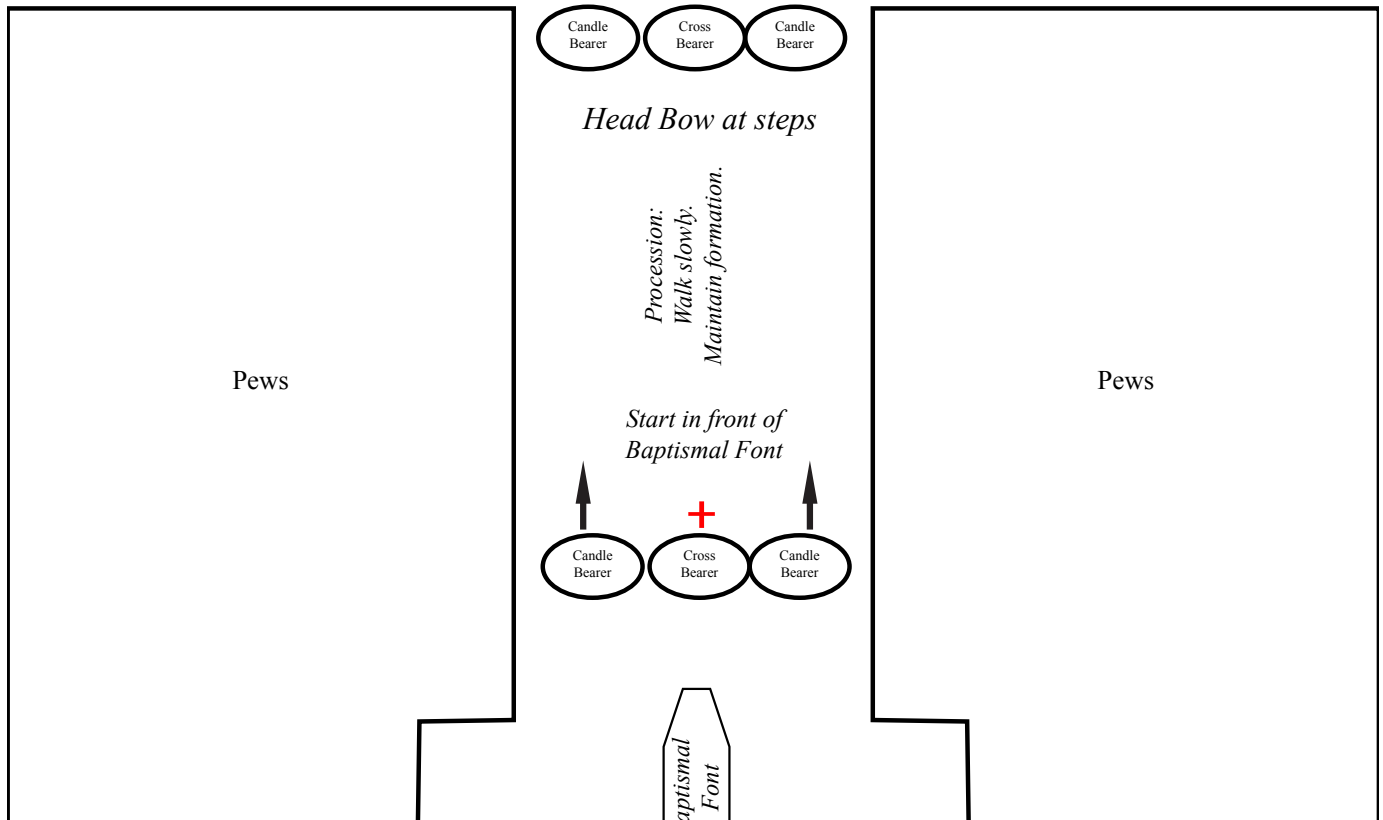
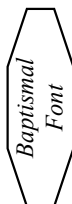
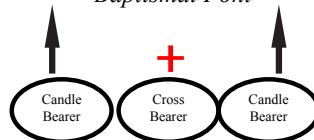
*Head Bow to Tabernacle*



*Head Bow at steps*

*Procession:  
Walk slowly.  
Maintain formation.*

*Start in front of  
Baptismal Font*



# ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Two Servers • See Diagram on next page

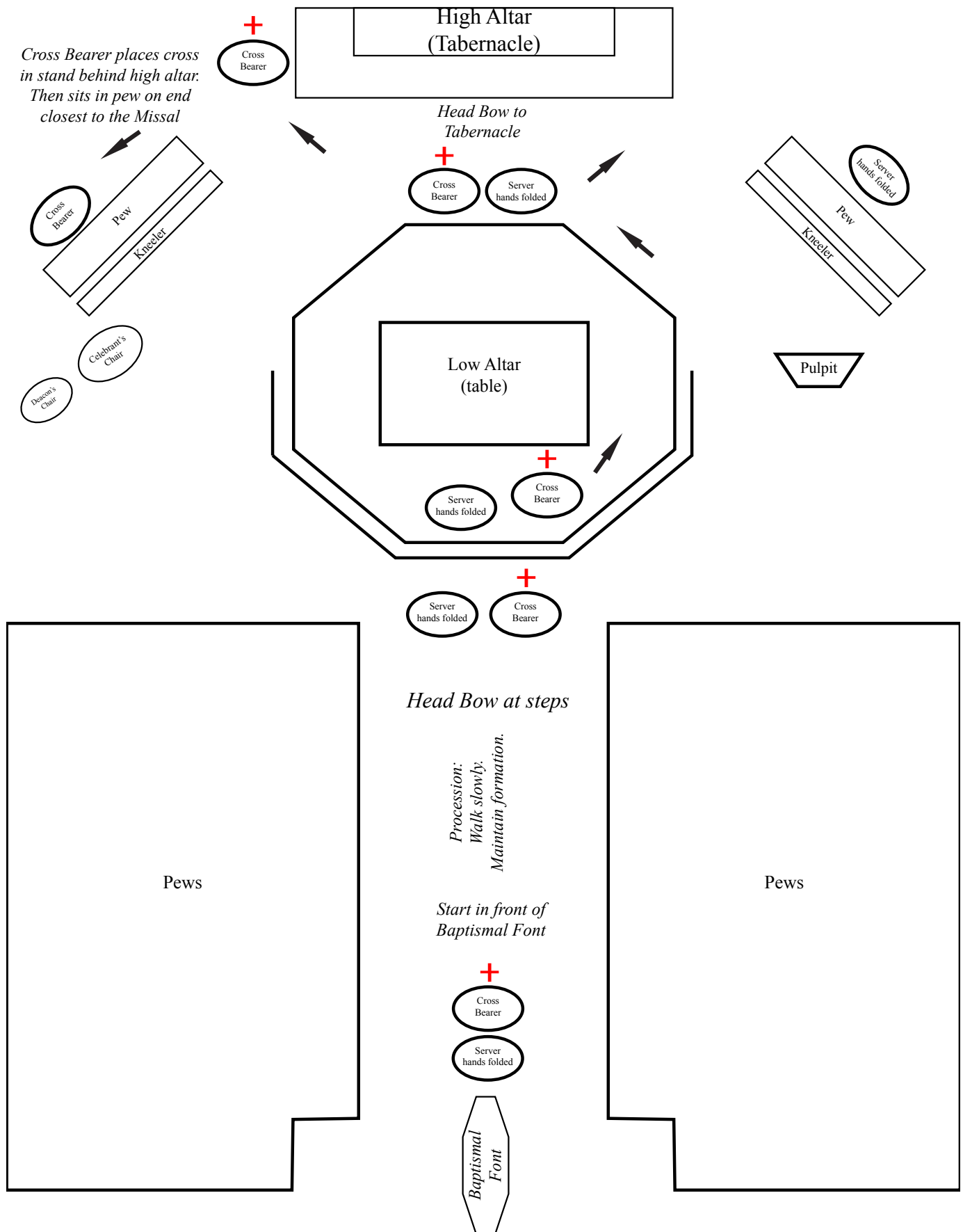
## WHEN ONLY 2 SERVERS ARE PRESENT:

1. The taller server carries the cross.
2. The other server folds their hands together and stands behind the Cross Bearer without carrying a candle.
3. At the start of the Mass, the other server follows the Cross Bearer up the aisle and upon reaching the foot of the Sanctuary, stands on the **right-side** of the Cross Bearer.
4. Both servers offer a head-bow before the steps of the Sanctuary.
5. After walking up the steps of the Sanctuary, the servers turns to the right and process around the **right-side** of the altar.
6. Return to the center and offer another head-bow to the Tabernacle.
7. The Cross Bearer places the cross in its stand behind the High Altar. While the server with folded hands enters the pew on the right.
8. Cross Bearer sits in the pew on the **left-side** of the Sanctuary.
9. The Cross Bearer sits on the end of the pew nearest the Missal.
10. The server with folded hands



# ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Two Servers • See Instructions on previous page



# Penitential Rite and Gloria

All servers need to remember that they are leaders of prayer during Mass. The Congregation is looking at you. If you are not praying along with the Priest and the community, others may choose not to pray as well. There are three settings throughout the year that cause the servers cues to change: Ordinary Time, Lent, and Easter.

## ORDINARY TIME (Vestment color is Green)

After the Kyrie (Lord, have mercy...) the **Gloria** is sung: (Glory to God in the highest...)  
When the line "Receive our prayer." is sung,  
the Cross Bearer takes the Missal and stands ready to walk to the Celebrant.

After "Amen" is sung, the Celebrant says or sings: "**Let us pray.**"  
The Cross Bearer carries the Missal and stands directly in front of the Celebrant.

## LENT (Vestment color is Violet)

The **Gloria** is *not* spoken nor sung.

At the beginning of the Kyrie (Lord, have mercy...)  
the Celebrant asks the Congregation to kneel and pray the Kyrie.

All servers kneel as well. Immediately after the Celebrant stands up, the Cross Bearer takes the Missal and stands ready to walk to the Celebrant.

The Celebrant says or sings: "**Let us pray.**"  
The Cross Bearer carries the Missal and stands directly in front of the Celebrant.

## EASTER SEASON (Vestment color is White)

The Penitential Rite is replaced by the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water:  
As soon as the Entrance Hymn ends, the Cross Bearer carries the Missal to the Celebrant  
and stands directly in front of him.

One Acolyte takes the bucket containing the Holy Water and the Aspergillum and stands to the left of the Celebrant as he prays the blessing over the water.

After the blessing, the Cross Bearer holding the Missal stands in place.  
The Acolyte holding Holy Water bucket follows the Celebrant around the church  
as he blesses the Congregation with the Aspergillum.

When the Celebrant and Acolyte return to the Sanctuary,  
the Acolytes return to their pew on the right-side of the Sanctuary.

The Celebrant returns to his chair and offers another prayer from the Missal.

The Cross Bearer remains standing in place.

The Gloria is then sung or spoken followed by the Opening Prayer,  
at which time the Cross Bearer returns to their pew.

After "Amen" is sung, the Celebrant says or sings: "**Let us pray.**"  
The Cross Bearer carries the Missal and stands directly in front of the Celebrant.

# Gospel Procession

See Diagrams on next page

*If there is only 1 server, the Gospel Procession is omitted*

## Liturgy of the Word

- 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

1. At the end of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**, the Lector says: “**The Word of the Lord.**”
2. Immediately after those words are spoken, both Acolytes\* rise together, take up their candles and walk single-file to either corner of the Low Altar standing on the corners of the green marble.
3. When the Priest or deacon walks to the center of the Low Altar and stands between you, he will lift up the ***Book of Gospels*** for the Congregation to see.
4. When he turns to the left towards the pulpit, both Acolytes turn with him and escort him to the pulpit.
5. The Acolytes stand on either side of the Priest or Deacon, facing each other.
6. When the ***Book of Gospels*** is read and kissed by the reader, the Acolytes return the candles to their places and sit down in their pews directly behind the pulpit.

*\* If there are only 2 servers, the Cross Bearer takes the place of one Acolyte.*

At the end of the **Responsorial Psalm**, the Cross Bearer crosses ***behind*** the High Altar to the other side of the Sanctuary and sit in the pews there.

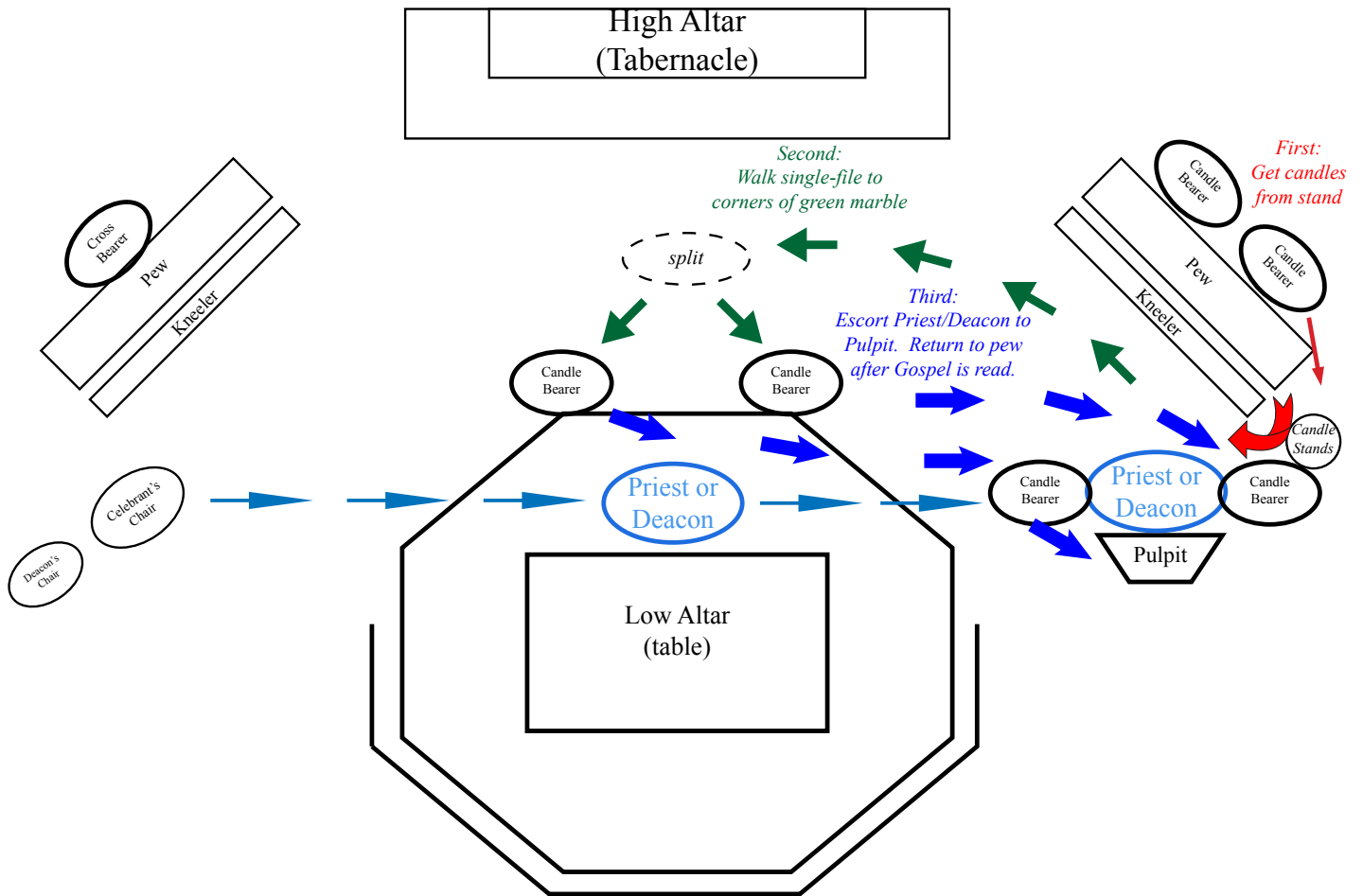
At the end of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**, after the lector says: “**The Word of the Lord**” pick up the candles and walk single-file to starting point for the Gospel Procession.



# Gospel Procession

Two or More Servers • See instructions on previous page

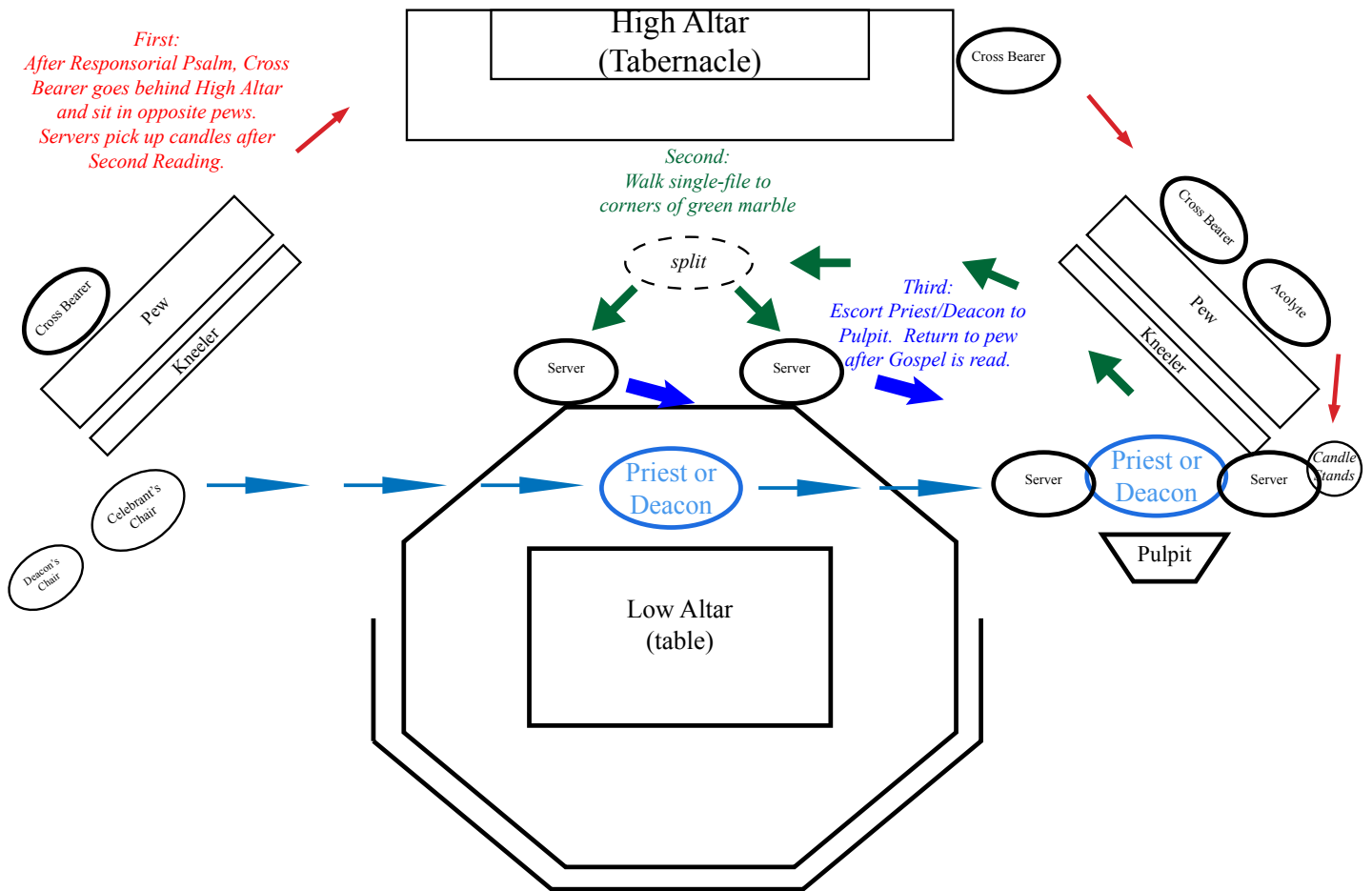
*If there is only 1 server, the Gospel Procession is omitted*



# Gospel Procession

Two Servers • See instructions on previous page

*If there is only 1 server, the Gospel Procession is omitted*



# Prayer of the Faithful

After the homily has ended, the Celebrant leads the Congregation in saying the **Profession of Faith**.

At the appropriate time noted below, the Cross Bearer moves towards the Celebrant to hold the binder containing the **Prayers of the Faithful**.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

All bow during these two lines:

and by the Holy Spirit  
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

Cross Bearer moves towards the Celebrant to hold the binder containing the Prayer of the Faithful

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

# Preparation of the Low Altar

Cross Bearer

After the **Prayer of the Faithful**, the Celebrant takes the binder being held by the Cross Bearer.

The Cross Bearer walks straight over to the Credence Table to prepare the Low Altar for the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**:

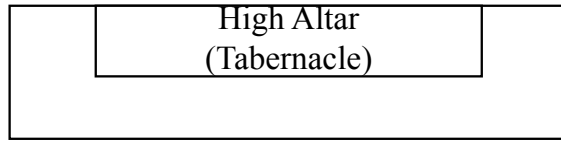
1. Bring the Missal and the gold book stand to the Low Altar and place them on the left side of center.
2. Bring the chalice (with the chalice veil facing the Congregation) to the Low Altar and place it in the center.  
*Do not remove the Chalice Veil.*
3. Stand behind the Celebrant's chair and wait to assist him with the offertory gifts. When the Priest removes the Chalice Veil and places it on the edge of the Low Altar, take it to the Credence Table.
4. When the Priest goes to the steps of the Sanctuary follow him and wait next to him on his right side. Take the cruet filled with wine when he hands it to you and return to the Credence Table.
5. Immediately bring the water and wine cruets, with tops removed over to the Priest or Deacon who will be waiting for you at the Low Altar.

After returning to the Credence Table with the Water and Wine Cruets, stand at your pew.

*When only 1 altar server is present, the Offertory Procession is omitted.*

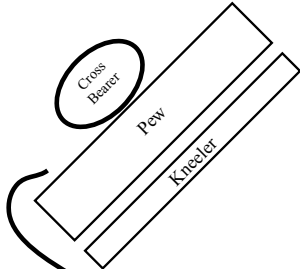
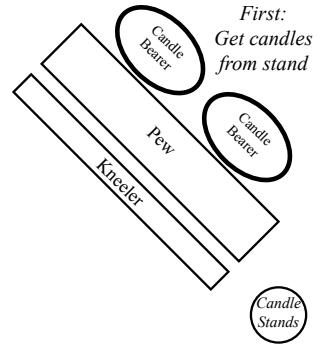
# Preparation of the Low Altar

Cross Bearer

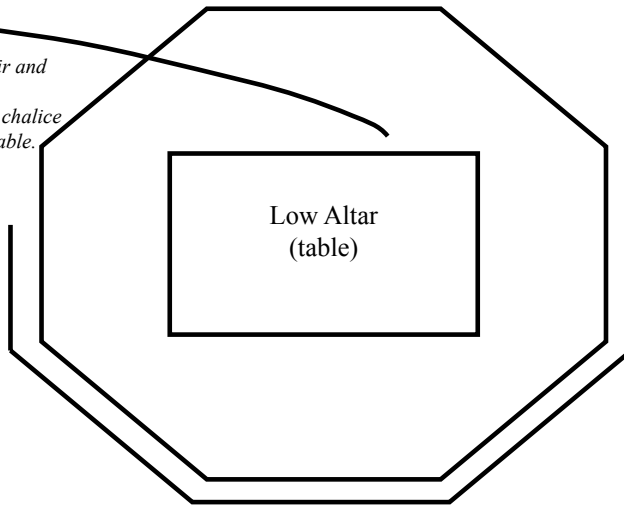
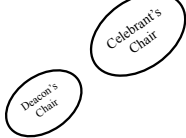


*First:  
Bring Missal and book stand to Low Altar - place left of center.*

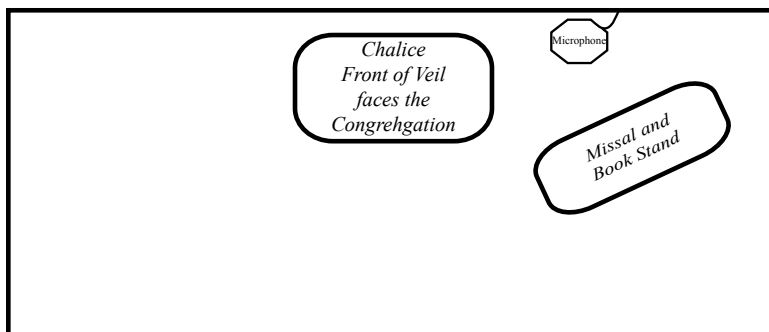
*Second:  
Bring Chalice to Low Altar and place in center. Do not remove the Chalice veil - make sure the front faces the congregation.  
See diagram below.*



*Third:  
Stand behind Celebrant's chair and wait to assist him.  
After the celebrant removes the chalice veil, take it to the credence table.*

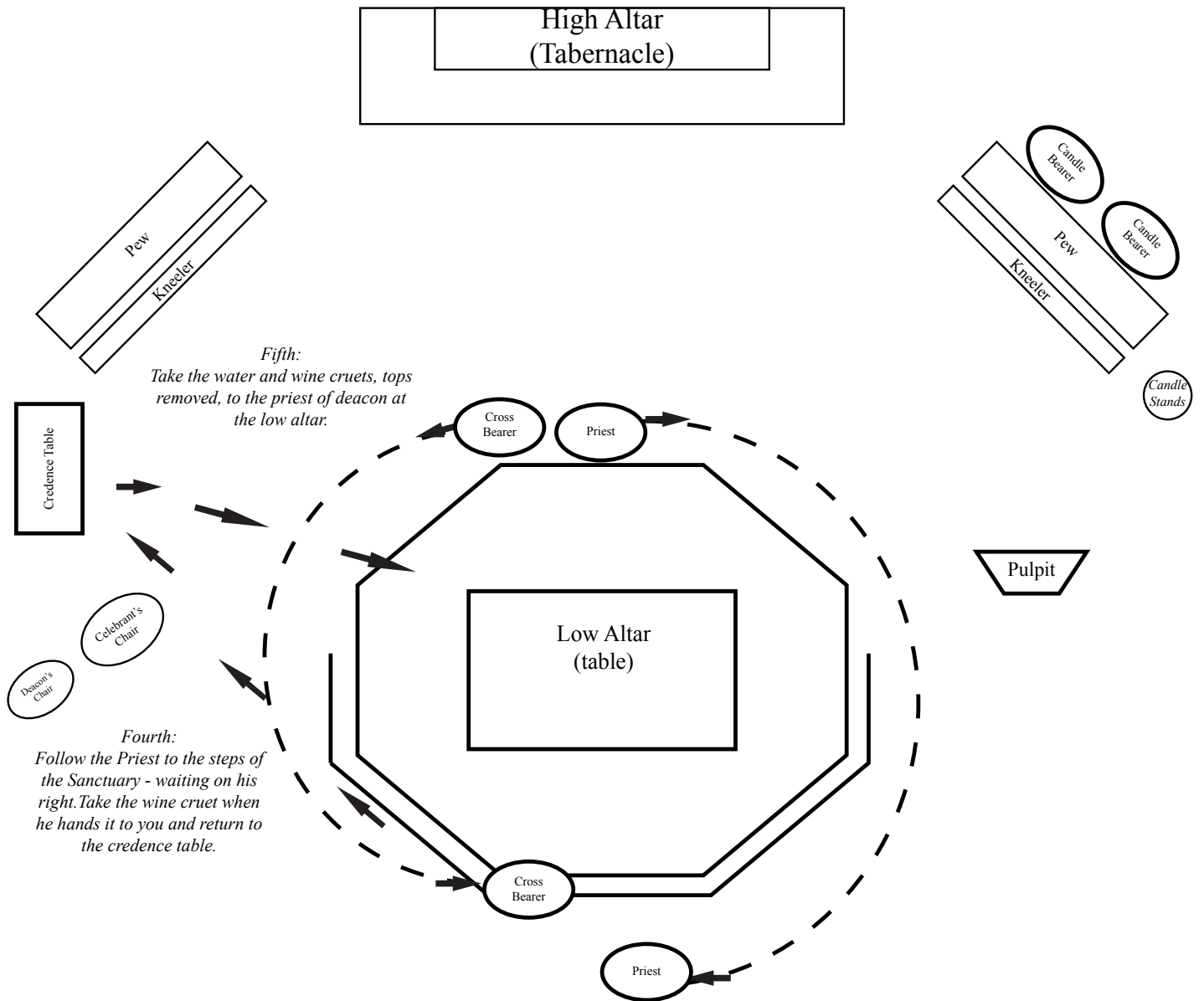


## Placement on Low Altar



# Preparation of the Low Altar

Cross Bearer



# Offertory Procession

Acolytes

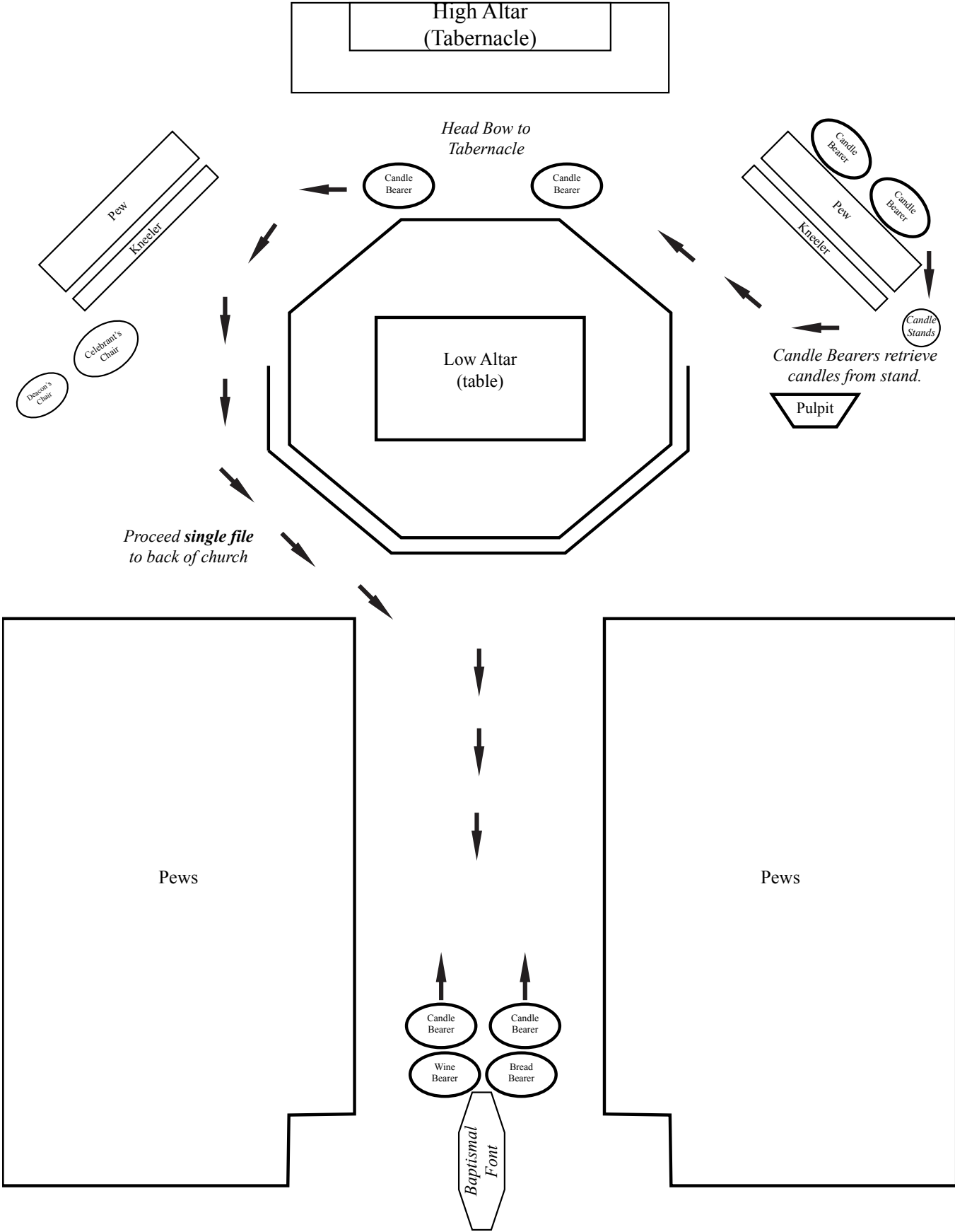
At the same time the Cross Bearer begins to prepare the Low Altar, both Acolytes prepare to lead the Offertory Procession:

1. Both Acolytes take up their candles, walk to the center of the Sanctuary between the High Altar and the Low Altar along the green marble, and offer a head-bow to the Tabernacle.
2. The Acolytes proceed in single-file around the **left-side** of the Low Altar (reverse of Entrance Procession) to the main aisle and walk single-file to the Baptismal Font (staying clear of the ushers).
3. After the collection has been taken up by the ushers and they clear the aisles, two people carrying the bread and wine with stand behind you, as you line up as if before the entrance procession.
4. When you see the Celebrant come to the edge of the Sanctuary in front of the Low Altar, proceed up the main aisle, step apart and turn towards each other so that the people bringing up the bread and wine can stand in between you two and hand the gifts to the Priest.
5. The Acolytes proceed in single-file around the altar and return their candles immediately to their places on the floor.
6. The Acolytes proceed in single-file across the Sanctuary **behind** the High Altar to assist the Cross Bearer with further preparation of the altar.
7. The Acolytes immediately prepare to wash the hands of the Priest. One Acolyte takes the water pitcher in one hand and the large metal bowl in the other. The other Acolyte takes the hand towel and opens it up, holding it open by two corners.
8. When the Cross Bearer walks back towards the Credence Table with the water and wine cruets, the Acolytes walk immediately to the Priest to wash his hands. *The only exception is at a Mass in which a Thurifer is present, when the Priest's hands are washed after he incenses the Low Altar.*
9. Return to the Credence Table and stand at the pew next to the Cross Bearer on the **left-side** of the Sanctuary.

*When there is only 1 Acolyte,  
proceed in the same way as above, except that you wash the hands of the Priest alone,  
immediately after the Cross Bearer brings over the Water and Wine Cruets.*

# Offertory Procession

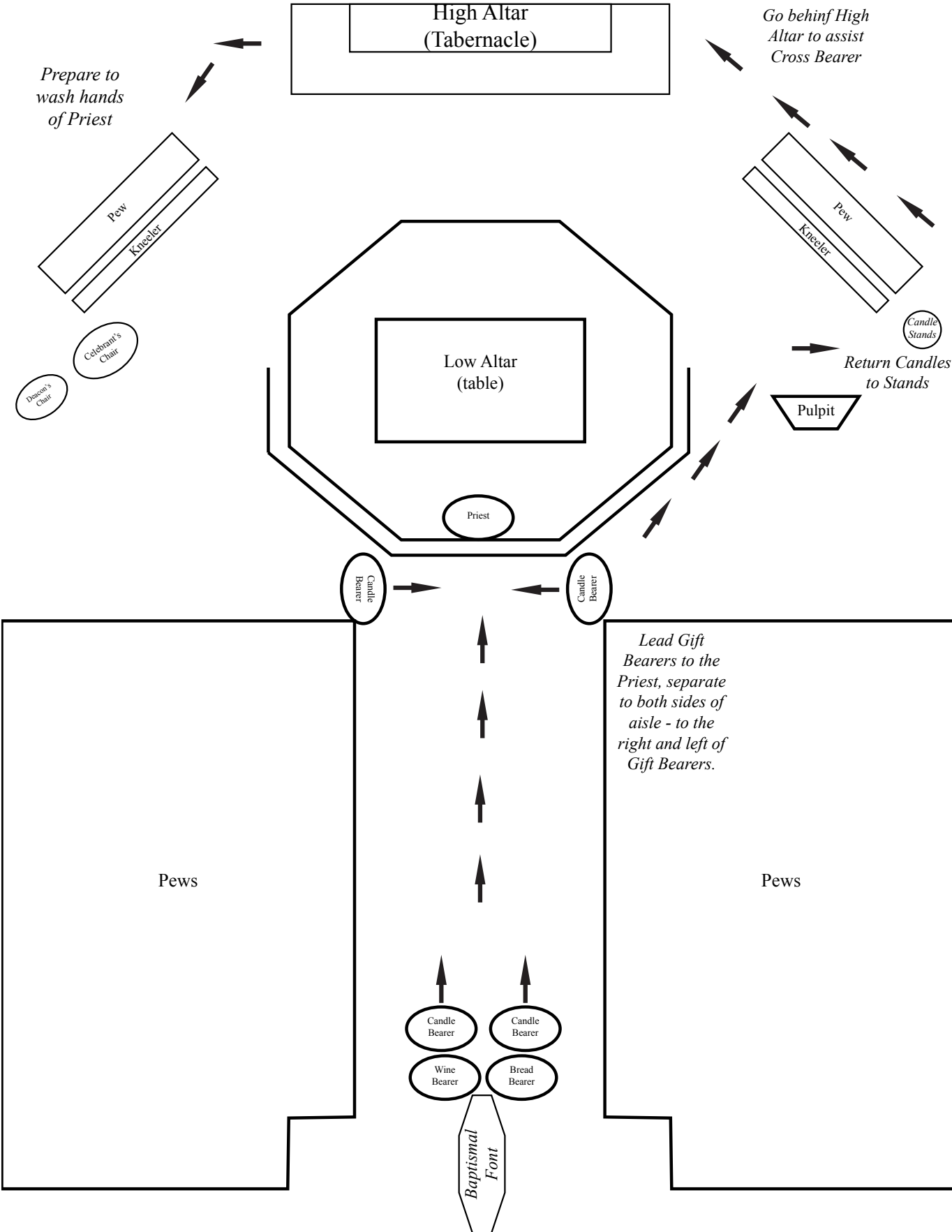
## Leaving the Sanctuary





# Offertory Procession

## Returning to the Sanctuary



# The Eucharistic Sacrifice

Not only is this the most important part of the entire Mass, it is essential that you pay attention at this time so that the bells are rung properly during the elevation of the Consecrated Host and Chalice.

The bells are rung to remind the Congregation that this is the moment when the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

*Be careful not to ring or knock into the bells unless it is the proper time. Be very gentle when moving them.*

There are four different Eucharistic Prayers that the Priest may choose from, but the words of consecration are always the same.

Just before the elevation of the HOST, the PRIEST says:

**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT:  
FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.**

*Ring bells for 3 seconds.  
(count 3 Mississippi's)*

Just before the elevation of the Chalice, the Priest says:

**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT.  
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,  
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,  
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY  
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.  
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.**

*Ring bells for 3 seconds.  
(count 3 Mississippi's)*

# The Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace

At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer the following words are spoken or sung:

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
All glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

After the "Amen" (also known as the Great Amen) is spoken or sung by the Congregation, all servers stand for the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

After the Lord's Prayer, the Priest continues with another Prayer which leads into the Sign of Peace:

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles:  
I leave you peace, my peace I give you.  
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,  
And grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom  
Where you live forever and ever.  
The Congregation and servers respond:  
**Amen.**

All servers line up along the green marble behind the PRIEST:

## **CROSS-BEARER**

After offering the Sign of Peace, take the Missal and gold book stand back to the Credence Table and return in line with the other servers on the green marble.

## **ACOLYTES**

At the same time, the Acolytes go together to the Credence Table:

One Acolyte retrieves any empty Ciboria and takes it back to the Low Altar.

The other Acolyte checks to see if there is a gold plate with Pyx (for the distribution of Holy Communion to the sick) and takes it back and places it on the **right-side** of the Low Altar.

Both Acolytes return to the green marble and line up again with the Cross Bearer.

# Distribution of Holy Communion

The Priest and Congregation then sing or say the *Agnus Dei* (Latin for Lamb of God):

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
Have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
Have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
Grant us peace.

After the *Agnus Dei* is spoken or sung by the Congregation, all servers kneel down.

Stand up to receive Holy Communion when you see the Priest drink the Precious Blood of Jesus from the Chalice.

*If the deacon is assisting at the MASS,  
wait until he drinks the Precious Blood of Jesus from the Chalice,  
then stand up to receive Holy Communion.*

After all servers receive Holy Communion, return to the pews on the **left-side** of the Sanctuary to be ready to assist in the clearing of the Low Altar after the distribution of Holy Communion to the Congregation.

## Clearing the Low Altar & Closing Prayer

Be alert during the distribution of Holy Communion, so that you know exactly when the Priest who is the Celebrant of the Mass has distributed Holy Communion to the last congregant and is walking to the Low Altar to purify the Sacred Vessels.

### CROSS-BEARER

1. Bring the Water Cruet to the Priest right away.
2. Pour the water from the Water Cruet gently over the fingers of the Celebrant until he tells you to stop.
3. Return to the Credence Table and bring the Chalice Veil to the edge of the Low Altar.
4. Return to the Credence Table, pick up the Missal and stand in place for the Closing Prayer.
5. When the Priest says or sings: “**Let us pray**” bring the Missal to him for the Closing Prayer.
6. After the Closing Prayer, place the Missal back on the gold stand and stand at your pew.

### ACOLYTES

1. At the same time, walk and then stand behind the Cross-Bearer as they pour the water over the Priest’s fingers.
2. Remove any Sacred Vessels that have been purified by the Priest and placed on the edge of the Low Altar.
3. After clearing the Low Altar, walk single-file across the Sanctuary along the green marble, offering a shoulder-bow to the Tabernacle in the same location as during the Entrance Procession and return to your pew on the **right-side** of the Sanctuary.

*When there is only 1 Acolyte, go to the same pew as the Cross Bearer.*

# Dismissal

After the Closing Prayer, the Priest reads the parish announcements and if needed, calls forward any ministers bringing the Eucharist to the sick or homebound.

The Priest or deacon carries a tray with the Pyx to these ministers. As he returns, the Cross Bearer comes forward and takes the tray from him, and places it on the Credence Table.

The Priest offers the Final Blessing and dismisses the Congregation.

The people respond: “**Thanks be to God.**”

# Recessional

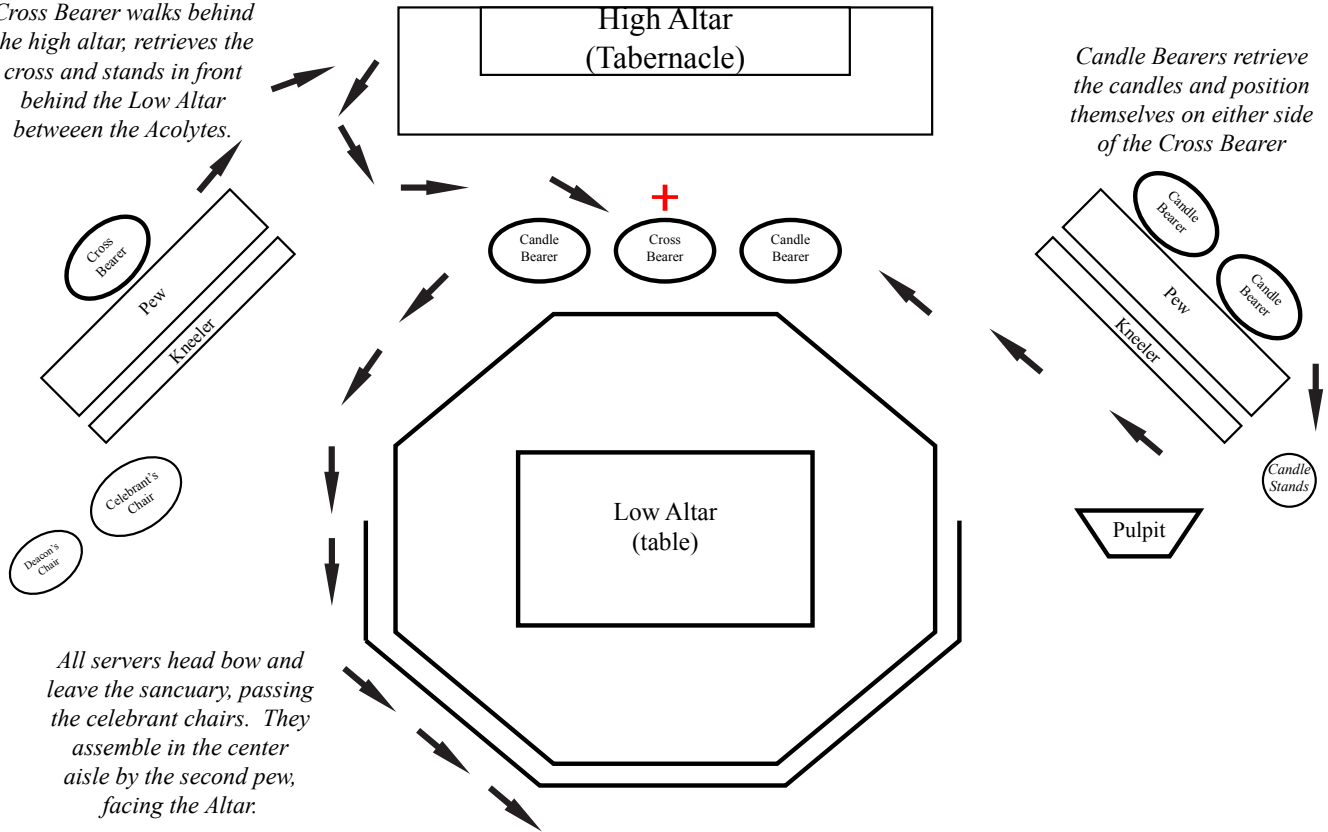
1. Immediately, the Cross Bearer retrieves the Processional Cross from behind the High Altar and stands in front of the Tabernacle along the green marble with the Acolytes standing on both sides.
2. At the same time the Acolytes pick up their candles and walk single-file along the green marble to stand on either side of the Cross Bearer.
3. All servers offer a head-bow together and turn to the left, walking single-file (opposite the Entrance Procession) past the **left-side** of the Low Altar, down the steps and into the main aisle, stopping at the second pew and turning around.
4. All servers offer another head-bow when they see the Celebrant genuflect or bow to the Tabernacle.
5. All servers turn around and proceed slowly down the main aisle and line up once again to the **right-side** of the Baptismal Font.

Wait for the Celebrant to bless you and thank you for serving. Return by the side-aisle to the sacristy.

# Dismissal and Recessional

*Cross Bearer walks behind the high altar, retrieves the cross and stands in front behind the Low Altar between the Acolytes.*

*Candle Bearers retrieve the candles and position themselves on either side of the Cross Bearer*



*All servers head bow and leave the sanctuary, passing the celebrant chairs. They assemble in the center aisle by the second pew, facing the Altar.*

