

Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard

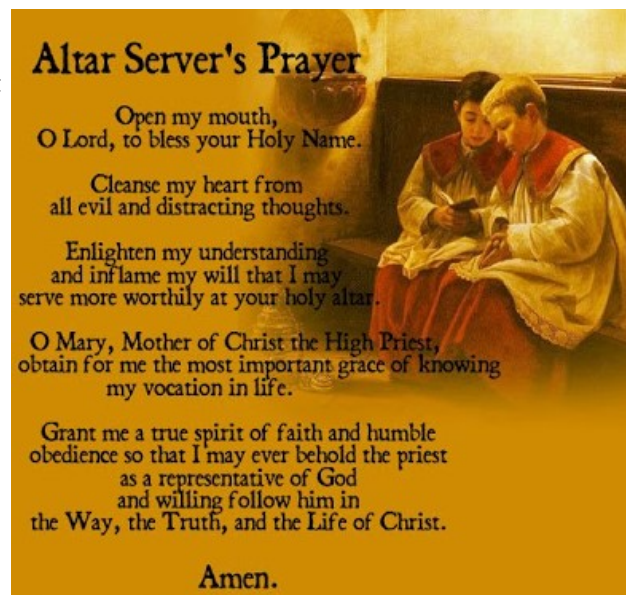


ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY GROWS AT ST BERNARD

In a time when some believe it has become increasingly difficult to engage young Catholics in the faith, it is exciting to see the St. Bernard Altar Server Ministry growing exponentially, with 67 newly trained servers recently joining our existing team of 37 altar servers. These new servers, who are in grades 3-8, will serve an important role, assisting our priests and enhancing the Celebration of the Liturgy at St. Bernard.

The new members of the Altar Server Ministry just completed training with Father Edmund, who was assisted by two of our experienced altar servers – Kevin Lauducci and John Grebeck. The trainees learned the many tasks they will be called upon to perform to ensure that the Mass runs smoothly. These include carrying the cross and the processional candles, holding the book for the celebrant, carrying the incense and censer, assisting the priest when he receives the gifts from the people, presenting the bread, wine, and water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts, and washing the hands of the priest. Servers also respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation and join in singing the hymns and other chants of the liturgy.

Stewardship in Action asked several of the newly trained altar servers to tell us about their decision to serve. Greg Rydberg, grade 3, says that he decided to attend training because he “wanted to be a part of the Mass and learn more about the Mass and how it works.” He hasn’t yet served, but is excited “to help and learn and be closer to God”. Camryn Yarwood, grade 6, also is recently trained. When asked why she decided to attend training, she said “I heard about it and people said it was a lot of fun and I thought it was a better way to follow in God’s footsteps.” She has



served at three Masses so far and reports that “it is a fun way to participate in Mass. I feel focused and even learn a lot more when I serve.”

Requirements to Become an Altar Server

- have a basic understanding of the Catholic Faith
- have received the sacrament of Holy Eucharist
- understand the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist
- normally receive the Eucharist when participating in the Mass

Salvatore Cicale, grade 9, has served September, 2015, when he was in the seventh grade. “Honestly, I became an altar server because it seemed like a good way to get service hours, because at the time five Masses already got me five hours. I have remained in this ministry for this long because I even after I collected my five hours that I had joined for, I really liked the priests and other altar servers, and I didn't want to quit and leave them.” His mother, Stephanie, is impressed that he’s stayed with the ministry because he plays football and lacrosse, does winter training and carries a robust course load. When asked if being closer to God had anything to do with continuing to serve, he said “that's between me and God”.

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ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY GROWS AT ST BERNARD (CONTINUED)

Several of our current altar servers, John Grebeck, Jos Parayil and Matt Parayil, served as emcees during the Masses of the Triduum this Easter. John says, "I knew that the emceeing for the Triduum Masses was different than anything I ever did as a server. As the emcee, I reminded the other servers what they needed to do and made the Mass run smoothly. On why he joined this ministry, John shares his perspective: "Personally, I've always felt that Mass has more of an impact for me when I'm helping it run." Asked about his favorite task while serving, John says, "I do not have a particularly favorite task because I try to treat each and every task like it is the most important thing I'll do that Mass. Every task, no matter how small, is really important for the Mass and how it runs."

The Altar Server Ministry is a vibrant part of the St. Bernard parish. This group of over 100 young people are living examples of stewardship at St. Bernard!

EASTER – A JOYFUL SEASON FOR MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for the Easter Season

Loving Father,

Christ is risen
and with him all creation!
Light replaces darkness,
joy replaces sadness,
life replaces death.

Through the power of your Spirit,
there is no failure
his love and mercy cannot reverse,
no humiliation he cannot exchange
with blessing,
no anger he cannot dissolve,
no routine he cannot transform.
All is embraced
by the victory of your son's
cross and resurrection.

Help us always be good stewards
of Easter's light,
see Resurrection as a daily event,
and yearn for the love of Christ
as intensely
as he yearns for our love.

We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

For those who exercise good stewardship of their Catholic faith, this April is the happiest, most joyful of months for it ushers in the great Easter season – a season of profound hope and joy. During the Easter season, which extends 50 days, from the Easter Vigil Mass of Saturday evening, March 31 to the Vigil Mass of Pentecost Sunday, on Saturday evening, May 19, Christian stewards are exhorted to celebrate and be joyful, for our Savior is with us.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel"), Pope Francis revealed that the best way to live out the joy of Easter is to become a genuine family of faith, an "evangelizing Church that comes out of herself." He urged Catholics around the world to contemplate the mind of Jesus Christ and what it means to be the "light of Christ." From there, Francis believed a spirituality of missionary discipleship could be cultivated that would "help the Church get out of herself" and reach out to those who live in darkness.

At the Easter Vigil, all the great symbols are there: darkness, light, fire, water. The Vigil begins in darkness; not a darkness to be ignored, but a darkness in which we realize where we would be without the light of Christ, a darkness that reveals much about our world, our own sinfulness, the darkness that sometimes envelopes our own lives and even shrouds our own hearts. But then, the great fire of the Vigil is lit, a fire which consumes the darkness, and the procession into the church reminds us of the light and strength provided by the community of the faithful and the saving light of Christ. Indeed, St. Paul maintains that we are stewards of this great light. We remember the waters of baptism during the Vigil as we renew our baptismal vows. The Vigil also brings into our community those newly baptized who proceed joyfully with us into April.

As missionary disciples who exercise stewardship of Jesus' teachings, come into the glory of this April, join with those apostles whose hearts were on fire, and contemplate the words of the risen Lord: "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Matt. 5:16). For missionary disciples, this charge should be enough to bring hope and joy. Indeed, April is the most glorious of months.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Reprinted with permission from the International Catholic Stewardship Council, April 2018.

Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

Contact Mark Dransfield (dransfam@gmail.com by calling 908-526-6649)

