

Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn
Knights of the Altar Handbook



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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Knights of the Altar are a group of servers assisting at the Liturgies at Maronite parishes. This booklet extends what is presented in the *Knights of the Altar Handbook* to fit the liturgical celebrations of the Maronite Rite.

1.1 Schedules

1.1.1 Liturgies

The schedule for Liturgies differs at each parish. On Holy Days of Obligation, there is usually a Liturgy on the previous evening. The times may change, but a calendar will be sent home periodically with the assigned Liturgies. Although every effort will be made to assign altar servers to the Liturgy of their choice, from time to time they may be asked to serve at another Liturgy. Also, there may be times when weddings, funerals, or special Liturgies will require altar servers to serve.

1.1.2 Meetings

The Knights of the Altar hold monthly meetings in the church. These will also be listed on the calendar sent home. These meetings are important because they give a chance to learn how to serve at the Liturgy and to meet the other altar servers.

Chapter 2

Manual at Arms

In medieval times, becoming a knight meant learning to use swords, shields, and a code of conduct. A knight's behavior brought respect to his lord. The knight learned these by following the example of other good knights, and by following his Manual at Arms.

Knights of the Altar are similar to these knights. The following Manual at Arms shows how a Knight of the Altar must behave while serving. Instead of weapons, Knights learn to use other items in serving the greatest Lord. The following section describes how to behave as a Knight of the Altar.

2.1 Bowing

Bowing shows respect for the person before you. Bowing symbolizes dying with Christ and rising with Him. There are three types of bows:

Head Bow: Only the head moves, the shoulders do not. Make the action smoothly and slowly.

Shoulder Bow: Both the head and the shoulders move as one action, as if you have a stiff neck. Bow only slightly forward, a matter of about six inches of movement forward.

Deep Bow: Both the head and the shoulders move together but the bending is at the waist.

All clergy, lectors, etc., make a deep bow at the altar if the Blessed Sacrament is present in the tabernacle, and then go to their appropriate locations. A head bow must be made when leaving the celebrant. When bowing, altar servers must bow at the same time and make the same bow.

2.2 The Hands

The hands must be held as “praying hands,” held together on the chest, palm to palm, with the fingers extended straight and close together pointing upwards and the thumbs

being crossed right over left. When one hand is being used, the other must be placed open palm on the chest. When not used, the hands must be placed within the sleeves of the alb against the front of the body or with palms crossed on the chest. When seated, they are to be placed palm down on each knee.

2.3 Candles

The candles on the sides of the altar and the acolytes' candles must be lit. Care must always be used when lighting the candles. The sleeves of the alb ought to be rolled up away from any flame. If the acolytes' candles are too short, they must be replaced prior to the start of the Liturgy. If an acolyte's candle goes out during the Liturgy, do not interrupt the Liturgy to light it, but instead carry it as if it were lit.

An altar server must extinguish candles with care because of the hot melted wax. If a candle snuffer is available, it ought to be used to prevent accidents with hot wax. If not, one hand should be placed behind the candle while blowing out the flame carefully. If a candle is too high for an altar server to extinguish, he should let another server or the priest know.

2.4 Walking and Turning

An altar server walks and moves about with sureness and with certain confidence that gives dignity to walking. Posture and smoothness of movements add a message in any Liturgy. A "sloppy" movement distracts a function being performed.

When walking, take each stride slowly, dignified and deliberately. A server must know where to go and then walk with head straight, shoulders back, hands held properly, and slowly. The server who does not have the proper stance and walk becomes a distraction at the altar and takes the peoples' minds off the sacrifice of the Liturgy.

2.5 Sign of the Cross

The Sign of the Cross is a prayer. The proper way to do it is to unfold the hands from the folded position at the chest, placing the left hand on the heart side. Keeping the right hand fingers closely together and fully extended, thumb in palm trace the sign in broad full movements. With the right hand, touch the forehead, the center of the chest without bringing the right hand below the left, and then the left and right shoulders in that order, touching the end of each shoulder. Then, re-clasp the hands.

Do not make the Sign of the Cross while carrying anything.



2.6 Missing Assignments

When an altar server arrives at a Liturgy where he is not assigned to serve, he ought to check in the sacristy to ensure there are enough altar servers. If the Liturgy has already started and he notices only one altar server is serving, he is to use the side aisle to quietly enter the sacristy, vest, and quietly join the other altar server. If there are no altar servers at the Liturgy, any altar servers in attendance ought to do the same **without being asked**.

If an altar server knows he cannot make an assigned Liturgy, he must call another altar server to trade with him, or call the director if he cannot reach another altar server. Missing an assignment without telling anyone is disrespectful, and repeatedly missing assignments will result in being asked to leave his fellow Knights.

Additionally, shoes must be worn when serving; sneakers and sandals are not acceptable.

Chapter 3

Rubrics of the Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy is the center of an altar server's work. It is in this endeavor that he renders his service to God by assisting the priest and laity in the celebration of liturgies and devotions. Being a chief servant at the altar, a Knight must display good posture, act and move swiftly, be at ease with himself, and most importantly, must possess a great confidence in whatever task he is doing.

The following discussion underscores the different actions done by an altar server while serving at the Liturgy, and will be referred to as the "Rubrics of the Liturgy"

Prayer books had the prayers and readings printed in black, while the directions were printed in red. The directions are called the "Rubrics of the Liturgy," from the Latin word *ruber* meaning "red," the root of the English word "ruby." Thus, the term rubrics is used to mean "rules." For the Knights of the Altar, rubrics are the rules for serving, and they include the proper way to stand, sit, carry candles, and perform other actions of the Liturgy.

While serving, the altar server must keep in mind the wonderful privilege that is his — serving at the altar of Christ. To serve is a calling with great honor.

3.1 Server Roles

The following list describes the roles an altar server may have during the Liturgy. An altar server may be called to serve multiple roles during a liturgy.

Acolyte: The acolytes are altar servers who carry candles placed within special stands. There are usually two acolytes, and they stand side-by-side when processing down an aisle. During the Liturgy, one or both acolytes will stand by the lector or priest as they read the Word of God.

Boat bearer: The boat bearer is an altar server who carries the boat with the incense for the censer. During the Liturgy, he will open the boat with the spoon handle turned to the priest. The boat is to be held next to the open censer to make it easier for

the priest to use the incense. When the priest is done, the boat must be closed and place back on its stand.

Censer bearer: The censer bearer is the altar server who carries the censer in front of him during processions. He must hold the censer, also known as the thurifer, with the chain within one fist. When the celebrant, concelebrant, or deacon uses the censer, the censer bearer accompanies the boat bearer to the stand, takes the censer, opens it by raising the lid, and lifts everything to a useful height. When the incense has been placed within it, the censer must be lowered, the lid closed, and the censer given to the celebrant, concelebrant, or deacon. The censer bearer returns to his seat until the celebrant, concelebrant, or deacon is done, and then he takes the censer from him and place it on its stand. Care must always be taken as the censer is hot.

Cross bearer: The cross bearer is an altar server who carries the crucifix during processions. The cross bearer leads processions, and must place the cross in its stand when he is done processing.

Crozier bearer: The crozier bearer gives and takes the crozier from the bishop during Liturgies where the bishop is present.

Mitre bearer: The mitre bearer gives and takes the mitre from the bishop during Liturgies where the bishop is present.

3.2 Serving at the Liturgy

Each Liturgy ought to have at least two altar servers serving. They work as partners helping the clerics at the altar and setting an example for those attending the liturgy. Serving requires knowing what to do during each part of the Liturgy and performing those actions with dignity. They can be acolytes during parts of the Liturgy, and censer and boat bearers during other parts.

3.2.1 Vesting in the Sacristy

Altar servers ought to arrive in the sacristy at least 15 minutes before the liturgy begins. This gives them time to vest. Each altar server may act as an acolyte, so he should ensure his candle is long enough to remain lit for the entire Liturgy.

Prayer Before the Liturgy

The celebrant will say a prayer with all present in the sacristy prior to the start of the Liturgy to prepare for the important task he will be doing — serving God through the Divine Liturgy.

3.2.2 Introductory Rites

Entrance

In processing to the altar, the Knights are always in the forefront of the line, serving as guides in preparing the way of Christ.

At the altar steps, each acolyte moves away from the other while facing the altar. The celebrant will be between them in the middle, and others may also be between them. The acolytes will always be at the very ends; they will not move until the priest bows. If they are carrying candles, the acolytes do not bow. They will place their candles where they belong and go to their places.

The altar servers join the people in making the Sign of the Cross as the celebrant greets the congregation. As part of the rubrics, altar servers are required to stand up straight, with their hands in a praying position, as they attentively listen to what the celebrant says.

Opening Prayers

Knights are not only there simply to serve at the Liturgy. As part of the congregation, they must also respond to what the celebrant says. Therefore, the responses are necessary for the altar servers to learn. When the celebrant says “Peace be with the church and her children,” the altar servers bring the boat and the censer to the celebrant, concelebrant, or deacons. In some parishes, Knights must wait until the end of the glory.

The censer and boat bearers approach the celebrant for him to put some incense into the censer. Proper handling of the censer and boat must be observed so that burning charcoal and any bits of incense do not scatter on the sanctuary floor.

After incensing the altar, the priest will begin the Qolo, Etro, and Qadeeshat. The altar servers are to respond when the celebrant says the Qadeeshat.

3.2.3 Liturgy of the Word

Reading

When the lector reaches the lectern, one altar server accompanies him with an acolyte’s candle and remains at the side of the lectern, facing the lectern. During the reading, the other altar server remains seated, sitting up straight with his hands on his lap as he listens to the Word of God.

When the reading is complete, the lector will conclude with “Praise be to God always.” The second altar server then retrieves his candle and meets the first one for the Gospel procession.

Alleluia

As the Alleluia is sung, the celebrant will process with the Book of the Gospels held high. The acolytes lead the way to the pulpit, standing one on each side of the pulpit, facing each other.

Gospel

While the celebrant reads the Gospel, the acolytes must stand up straight and hold the candles properly. The light of the candle symbolizes Christ as the Light of the Word itself.

When the celebrant is through reading the Gospel, he says, “This is the Truth! Peace be with you.” The acolytes return their candles to their stands and proceed to their seats for the homily.

Homily

Everybody takes his seat during the homily. Knights must properly hear the homily being given by the celebrant to enlighten them. Servers must give their utmost attention as to what is being said in their assigned places with hands rested on the lap. Thus reading of any printed matter is prohibited because at this particular time, the people will be focused on the altar area, and the Knights are to be an inspiration for all to listen intently, particularly on the homily as a source of nourishment of the Christian life.

During this time, as well as in the other parts of the Liturgy, servers must refrain from moving about the altar, because they can easily distract the congregation, and thus full concentration on the celebration of the Liturgy is partly neglected. Unless the act is urgently needed, movement about the sanctuary during the Liturgy is strictly prohibited.

The Creed

This is one prayer a Knight must know. He must recite it with reverence, professing in what he believes — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3.2.4 Liturgy of the Eucharist (Anaphora)

The Offertory

The offertory procession begins as the celebrant awaits the offerers. The two acolytes process, with those bringing the gifts following them. They return the acolyte candles to their proper places afterward.

After the celebrant says two more prayers at the altar, the boat and censer bearer go to him. The celebrant incenses the altar, the gifts, and the people. Afterward, the altar servers replace the boat and censer, and then return to their designated places.

Rite of Peace

The celebrant will then offer the Sign of Peace to those serving at the altar, and then to the congregation. After all the altar servers receive the Sign of Peace from the celebrant by placing their hands over his, they proceed to the center aisle, first stopping to bow together at the altar steps facing the altar. Each altar server will share the Sign of Peace with the person closest to him in each pew as he makes his way down the aisle, saying “Peace be

with you.” At the end of the aisle, the altar servers must wait to return together, bow to the altar, and return to their seats.

If there is only one altar server, a parishioner may approach him to receive the Sign of Peace and act as the second altar server would during this time. Give this person the Sign of Peace first and proceed to the other side of the aisle.

Consecration

All Knights stand attentively during the Consecration of the Eucharist. There must be utmost silence, because the Consecration reflects the things that have transpired during the Last Supper. This is where transubstantiation, or the changing of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, takes place.

The acolytes must show reverence to the Body and Blood of Christ during Consecration. They must look straight at these sacred elements and stand as the celebrant elevates them; then make a head bow when he bows.

During this time, Knights respond properly to all the prayers being said by the celebrant. They may follow in the Qurbano Book if they have not memorized the proper responses.

Intercessions

The altar servers sit for the intercessions, yet they must still respond with, “Lord, have mercy.” The priest will pray over the Body and Blood of Christ, and when he raises the chalice, everyone stands up.

Our Father

The Knights must stand attentive during the “Our Father” with their hands in the praying position. They recite this prayer aloud.

Communion

The altar servers receive communion before the congregation. After receiving, the altar servers take candles or patens and stand to the sides of those giving communion. When the Communion Rite is over, the altar servers return their candles or patens and stand at the their seats.

3.2.5 Concluding Rites

After the final blessing and kissing of the altar, the celebrant proceeds to the front of the altar, awaiting the altar servers to join him. They turn with the celebrant, one on each side and bow reverently to the altar when he bows. Afterward, they lead the procession to the sacristy or down the aisle, always ahead of the clergy.

Special: Prayers for the Dead (Forty-Day Liturgies)

When a Liturgy is a forty-day Liturgy, prayers will be said for the recently departed. The boat and censer are brought to the celebrant for the incense service. These prayers will occur before the final procession out.

3.3 After the Liturgy

When everything is concluded, the Knight says the “Prayer After Liturgy” as he gives thanks for the important thing that he has achieved — that of serving God.

3.4 Liturgies on Special Occasions

Certain Liturgies will have special parts to them, such as the ones on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Some may be celebrated by the bishop. In these cases, more altar servers may be required to serve, and this is a great honor. Special training will be arranged before such a Liturgy.

Chapter 4

Knight's Information

This section provides information about the Knights of the Altar group. The pastor may modify as he sees fit.

4.1 Symbol of Spiritual Knighthood

The symbol of the Knights of the Altar is a main shield, surrounded by others symbolic items. The shield has three parts, representing the Holy Trinity, and the three Divine Persons in one God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — the source of all graces.

The shield itself represents our Faith, nourisher of sanctifying grace in our souls, and protection against the attacks and temptations of this world. The chalice and host remind us of the privilege in assisting with the great sacrificial banquet, a mystery of God instituted by Christ. The two candles bring to mind the natures of Christ, divine and human. Christ, true God and true Man is the Mediator between God and all of us, giving us direction to guide us to our heavenly Father. As mediator, He “bridged the gap” between God and Man and restored the flow of grace for our salvation.

The two altar servers remind us of our most important purpose of assisting on Christ's altar and the motto, “Learn and Serve.”

4.2 Motto

The Knight's motto is “Learn and Serve.” Learn and Serve brings together three important ideas. First, *learn* means to develop God-given talents through knowledge and skills. Every member ought to take the initiative, study hard and learn as well.

Secondly, knowledge gained is only potential for accomplishing a goal. *Serve* means to use the knowledge, actually serving at the altar as often as one can and as well as one is able. Serve with pride and joy in being one of Christ's Knights so that every action reflects the meaning and importance of traditional symbols.

Lastly, *learn and serve* commands action. American President John F. Kennedy asked in his oath, “for God's blessing and help,” and challenged all Americans, old and young,

to remember “that here on earth, God’s work must truly be our own.” Knights should practice the motto, “Learn and Serve,” in the everyday world of their home, school, and neighborhood. Work with Christ in making this a better world. Action, works of charity, and mercy truly serve Christ the King. As altar servers practice them, everyone will experience compassion for our brothers and generosity for helping those in need, for here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.

It is a Knight’s goal to give his best possible service as often as he can (quality and quantity), that when the laity looks at them, they will know the Knight’s pride in being a Knight in Christ’s service in the altar.

4.3 Slogan

The Knight’s of the Altar slogan is “Observe, Judge, and Act.” Like the knights of old, altar servers must use those same principles of *observing* the situation for themselves, *judging* the situation based upon what they observe, and then *acting* accordingly. With this social inquiry of the principles of “Observe, Judge, and Act,” Knights can exercise a great influence of being good at school, at home, in their neighborhood, and in their community.

The Second Vatican Council decreed that young people themselves ought to become the prime and direct apostles of youth, exercising the apostolate among themselves and through themselves and reckoning with the social environment in which they live.

Altar servers are to use the principles of Observe, Judge, and Act to decide on their own and to use courage to stand for the decision that had been made. The slogan itself is a command to think for one self with the mind God gave us.

4.4 Knight’s Promise

The Knight’s Promise is:

I, _____, promise to observe faithfully the rules of the Knights of the Altar and to be a loyal Knight at all times.

The promise is two fold: to observe the rules and to be loyal. Thus, it is a Knight’s goal to serve all altar assignments, to substitute when called upon, to attend every meeting, to give the best to his Order and to the Unit.

4.5 Code

Knight’s of the Altar have eight codes to observe:

Responsible: A Knight receives altar assignments, knows what to do, and does it. He is always willing and can be relied upon to serve and to substitute whenever called upon. Thus, a Knight is a Responsible Server.

Loyal: A Knight is at the Liturgy, ready to serve regardless of any conflict that arises. He observes the promise of loyalty and of obeying the rules of his Church, Knights of the Altar unit, family, and community.

Truthful: A Knight keeps his word with everyone. He lives the slogan of “Observe, Judge, and Act” by being truthful in every word and deed.

Polite: A Knight is always friendly and polite to religious, adults, children, and his peers. He is kind to all.

Honest: A Knight is known for his good name and wanting little but to serve his King at the Liturgy. With clear conscience, he faces everyone with a smile of joy.

Helpful: A Knight avoids fighting and anger, helping brothers in need without reward. He lives the motto through faith, hope, love, and joy.

Prompt: A Knight is thrifty with the material things of this life. He is prompt in his service at the altar and to his unit. Thus, in serving, a Knight ought to come at least 15 minutes before the Liturgy. Likewise, he attends the meetings on time.

Reverent: A Knight is always on his best behavior in the sanctuary where Christ is truly present. The joy of serving Christ is reflected on his face and actions when saying the pledge.

4.6 Pledge

We, the Knights of the Altar, pledge allegiance to our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ to his Vicar and other representatives on earth. And to Mary, Our Queen Immaculate to whom we will serve faithfully until we attain eternal triumph in heaven.

A Knight's steadfast devotion and almost unquestioning loyalty is his allegiance, a key word in the Knight's Pledge. The Knight's pledge their loyalty to the Church and to religious authority. This includes allegiance to Christ, real leader of the Church working through his visible representatives, the Pope, college of Bishops, and other religious leaders and lay leaders, and to Mary, Queen of Apostles.

4.7 Ranking

Maronite societies of the Knights of the Altar have adopted the ranking pattern being use by the Knights of the Altar Head Office with some minor changes and revisions that are applied into it.

Advancement to the next rank is conducted yearly during the Annual Investiture Ceremony, and is determined through the use of certain criteria such as the number of services, examinations, attitude and other necessary requirements.

The following are the six major ranks of the unit:

Apprentice: An apprentice means a learner or a beginner. During this stage, a Knight is considered as a trainee. He must learn to familiarize himself with the different things that a Knight should know, such as the Knight's pledge, motto, codes, slogan, rubrics, vestments, and code of conduct. Therefore, it is the first rank to which a Knight is assigned.

Page: Pages are those who have served for a year or two. The term page was originally used during the Middle Ages in reference to young boys (seven years old) who were sent to the household of a Knight for proper training of manners, singing, reading, playing of musical instrument, and the handling of arms.

Knight: Knight is the rank that certifies a member to be a true Knight, and can become a qualified aspirant for training others. A Knight behaves courteously, knowing the names of vestments, areas of the church, and items used during the Liturgy. During the Middle Ages, Knights were considered the highest class of fighting men, although the term "Knight" was derived from the Anglo-Saxon and Middle English word meaning "a household retainer." Receiving the Knighthood was observed in this manner:

When a squire reached the age of twenty, he might be made into a knight. In such cases, the squire knelt before his lord, who pronounced him a Knight, and then gave him a stout blow with his open hand, or the flat side of his sword. Perhaps the blow was a sign that the new Knight was able to take the blows of battle.

Note: A squire during that time referred to a boy who reached the age of fourteen, and thus became a Knight's squire, meaning "shield bearer". Elected officials may come from this rank.

Knight Captain: A Knight Captain represents a leader among his peers, having served at least four years. As an experienced Knight, he sets an example for all in his behavior, respect, and reverence, politely correcting younger members and being confident in his actions while serving.

Knight Commander: A Knight Commander is a member who has at least five years of service. His responsibility becomes greater as fellow Knights belonging to the lower ranks look up to them with much reverence. Leadership training is further enhanced since non-elected officers of the unit may come also from this rank, although members having such a rank (Knight Commander) may be qualified to run for the position of Supreme Grand Knight.

Grand Knight: Grand Knights are members with at least a six-year membership tenure. A Grand Knight represents the highest rank of service among the Knights of the Altar. As such, he should always be aware that his conduct must be pure at all times.

Chapter 5

Requirements for Promotion

5.1 Entering as an Apprentice

The following checklist must be completed to enter the Knights of the Altar as an Apprentice. The applicant

-
- has received his First Holy Communion.
 - has received his Knights of the Altar Handbook and supplement.
 - has made his Promise of Commitment.
-

5.2 From Apprentice to Page

The following checklist must be completed by an Apprentice in order to advance to a Page.
The Apprentice

-
- has entered the fourth grade of Sunday School.
 - exhibits the proper character of a Knight of the Altar.
 - has learned to serve alone.
 - has learned to serve as an acolyte.
 - has volunteered at three parish functions over the past year.
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - can make the Sign of the Cross.
 - knows the Our Father.
 - knows the Hail Mary.
 - knows the Glory Be.
 - attended three Knights of the Altar meetings over the past year.
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - can name the vestments used by an altar server.
 - has served at his assigned Liturgies.
 - has shown the various bows.
-

5.3 From Page to Knight

-
- has entered the fifth grade of Sunday School.
 - exhibits the proper character of a Knight of the Altar.
 - has mentored an apprentice at Liturgy.
 - has learned to serve as a boat, censer, or cross bearer at a Liturgy.
 - has volunteered at three parish functions over the past year.
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - knows the Our Father.
 - knows the Hail Mary.
 - knows the Glory Be.
 - knows the Nicene Creed.
 - attended three Knights of the Altar meetings over the past year.
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - can name the vestments used by an altar server.
 - has served at his assigned Liturgies.
 - has shown the various bows.
 - can name vestments used by religious at Liturgy.
 - can name parts of the church.
-

5.4 From Knight to Knight Captain

-
- has entered the sixth grade of Sunday School.
 - exhibits the proper character of a Knight of the Altar.
 - has mentored a page or apprentice at a Liturgy.
 - has volunteered at three parish functions over the past year.
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - knows the Our Father.
 - knows the Hail Mary.
 - knows the Glory Be.
 - knows the Nicene Creed.
 - has prayed at the Stations of the Cross.
 - attended three Knights of the Altar meetings over the past year.
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - can name the vestments used by an altar server.
 - has served at his assigned Liturgies.
 - has shown the various bows.
 - can name vestments used by religious at Liturgy.
 - can name parts of the church.
 - can name the items used during the Liturgy.
-

5.5 From Knight Captain to Knight Commander

-
- has entered the sixth grade of Sunday School.
 - exhibits the proper character of a Knight of the Altar.
 - has mentored a page or apprentice at a Liturgy.
 - has volunteered at three parish functions over the past year.
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - function and date:
 - knows the Our Father.
 - knows the Hail Mary.
 - knows the Glory Be.
 - knows the Nicene Creed.
 - has prayed at the Stations of the Cross.
 - attended three Knights of the Altar meetings over the past year.
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - can name the vestments used by an altar server.
 - has served at his assigned Liturgies.
 - has shown the various bows.
 - can name vestments used by religious at Liturgy.
 - can name parts of the church.
 - can name the items used during the Liturgy.
-

5.6 From Knight Commander to Grand Knight

-
- has entered the seventh grade of Sunday School.
 - exhibits the proper character of a Knight of the Altar.
 - has learned to serve alone.
 - has learned to serve as an acolyte.
 - has volunteered at three parish functions over the past year.
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - knows the Our Father.
 - knows the Hail Mary.
 - knows the Nicene Creed.
 - has prayed at the Stations of the Cross.
 - knows all the sacraments and what they are.
 - knows the Liturgical Seasons.
 - attended three Knights of the Altar meetings over the past year.
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - functions and date:
 - can name the vestments used by an altar server.
 - has served at his assigned Liturgies.
 - has shown the various bows.
-

Appendix A

Liturgical Knowledge

This section describes items used during the Liturgy and information about the Maronite Liturgy. This information will prove useful when preparing for promotional examinations and general knowledge.

A.1 Vestments

Historically, the vestments worn by the priests come from the common dress of the Roman Empire. Until the end of the fourth century when the empire fell into the hands of the barbarians, the mode of fashion for men underwent changes, although the priests still retained the use of vestments during the liturgical services.

There are reasons why clergy use special garments for Liturgy celebration. In Psalms 29:2, the faithful, especially the leaders were urged to adore God in holy attire. In the Old Testament, Mosaic priests such as Aaron were dressed in special garments. These special garments foster a sense of awe in worshipping God.

Cassock: A plain black, light-weight, ankle-length garment with long sleeves but no hood. The cassock has buttons down the center of the front from the neck to the ankles.

Jibbe: A black, traditional, Maronite monastic robe worn by men in the sanctuary.



Alb: A long white robe worn over regular clothing that can be used by all liturgical ministers.

Amice: A short linen cloth covering the shoulders.

Stole: A long, narrow rectangular garment similar to a scarf worn around the neck so that it hangs down in front of the legs, ending below the knees. The color of a stole matches the liturgical season. Only ordained clergy wear a stole. Subdeacons wear a stole crossed over the left shoulder and under the right

arm. Deacons wear a stole over the left shoulder. Priests wear a stole around the neck with both ends in front of them. A stole can be worn over a jibbe, an alb, or a cassock.

Cincture: A rope or cloth belt, sometimes with tassels at the ends, used as a belt outside the alb.

Cope: A type of cape worn by the celebrant

during a Maronite Liturgy.

Mitre: A distinctive hat worn by a bishop.



A.2 The Liturgical Calendar

Just as we have a calendar from January to December for a year, the Church has a calendar year. Instead of measuring months and days, the liturgical calendar follows weeks. Instead of the seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, the Church has seasons to remind us of special spiritual events.

Sundays of the Church: The liturgical year for the Church starts in November, with

- Consecration Sunday
- Dedication Sunday

Season of the Glorious Birth: The six weeks before Christmas Day and the twelve days following Christmas Day, ending on January 5. These include

- Announcement to Zechariah
- Announcement to the Virgin Mary
- Visitation to Elizabeth
- Birth of John the Baptist
- Revelation to Joseph
- Genealogy Sunday
- Feast of Christmas
- Adoration of the Magi
- Finding in the Temple

Season of Epiphany: The weeks between January 6 and the end of the Epiphany Season.

Season of Commemorations: Three Sundays celebrating the Priests, the Righteous and Just, and the Faithful Departed. These occur prior to Lent, and include

- The Priests
- The Righteous and Just
- The Faithful Departed

Season of the Great Lent: Six weeks beginning Ash Monday and finishing Easter Sunday.

- Entrance into Lent
- Healing of the Leper
- Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman
- The Prodigal Son
- Healing of the Paralytic
- Healing of the Blind Man
- Hosanna Sunday

Season of Resurrection: The seven weeks starting Easter Sunday and finishing the first Sunday of Pentecost.

Season of Pentecost: The weeks starting fifty days after Easter and finishing the first Sunday of the Holy Cross. This is the longest season, lasting about eighteen weeks.

Season of the Holy Cross: The six or seven weeks after the Season of Pentecost and before the Season of the Glorious Birth.

The week before Easter is known as Holy Week. Lent itself lasts forty days. It begins on Ash Monday and ends on Holy Saturday. In early times those who are getting ready for Baptism used to receive special training during Lent, and any of the faithful who had committed serious sins used to do their public penance. During this time we ought to do all we can to deepen our faith, to turn away from sin, and to review our lives. The Church asks the faithful to pray, to fast, to give alms, to listen to Lenten sermons, and to receive the sacraments. It is against the mind of the Church to go to dances and other public festivities during this time.

On Ash Monday, parishioners receive blessed ashes which the priest puts on their foreheads in the form of a cross. This reminds them that by this they will all have to die someday, and warns them to do penance.

Passion Sunday, also called “Palm Sunday” and “Hosanna Sunday,” is celebrated on the Sunday before Easter. Thus begins Holy Week, the most important week of the year. A ceremonial procession of our Lord is held in Jerusalem. By this, Christians show honor and faith in Christ our King.

On Holy Thursday, Christians remember the Last Supper, in which our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist. On this day in each Church only one priest usually celebrates Liturgy; other priests and all the faithful take part in the Liturgy and receive the body of our Lord, just as the apostles did at the Last Supper. A ceremonial Washing of the Feet occurs during the Liturgy, in which a reënactment of the Last Supper occurs. The priest washes the feet of twelve parishioners, representing Christ washing the feet of the apostles. The color for this day is white.

On Good Friday, Christians celebrate the passion and death of our Lord, and His victory over the powers of darkness. The history of the passion is sung or read; then prayers are offered for all classes of men. After that, the cross is unveiled and honored; Christians

thereby adore Christ, our Savior, Who conquered sin and death. At the end of the service, the people come forward to venerate the cross. This is not technically a Liturgy, but only a service. No Liturgy is offered on Good Friday. The color for this day is black.

On Holy Saturday Christians are quiet and thoughtful, turning their minds to our Lord's resting in His tomb. The Easter Liturgy celebrates with joy and solemnity the mystery of our redemption. The feast of Easter is the greatest of all feasts.

Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate Pentecost. This is the day on which Christ sent the Holy Spirit down upon His Church.

A.3 Holy Days of Obligation

The Maronite liturgical calendar has eight Holy Days of Obligation. These are days other than Sundays on which liturgies must be attended. These are

Circumcision of Jesus	January 1
The Epiphany	January 6
Feast of St. Maron	February 9
Ascension Thursday	40 days after Easter Sunday
Assumption	August 15
All Saints' Day	November 1
Immaculate Conception	December 8
Christmas Day	December 25

A.4 The Meaning of Colors

The use of colors varies by parish. It is not definite, and many parishes have customs. The Maronite Rite speaks only of joyful and somber colors.

Appendix B

Items

B.1 Altar Linens

The cloths use in connection with the Blessed Eucharist are called sacred linens, such as altar cloths, the corporal, the pall, the purificator, and the finger towel.



The Altar Cloth is used to cover the mensa of the altar. This symbolizes the linen shroud in which the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was wrapped when it was placed in the tomb.

The Corporal is a wide linen cloth, which is spread out in the middle of the Altar where the chalice or monstrance is rested.

The Pall is a stiff square of linen which

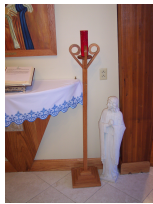
serves to cover the large host resting on the paten when it is on the chalice and to cover the chalice during the Liturgy to protect its contents from dust or other impurities.

The Purificator is a cloth of linen or hemp used for drying the chalice. It has a small cross in the middle to distinguish it from the finger towel. It is used for cleaning the chalice after communion.

B.2 Sacred Articles

There are also sacred articles that are used in the Liturgy and in other devotional services.

Acolytes' Candles: The candle stands and candles carried by altar servers during the Liturgy.



Cruets: Cruets are the vessels from which the water and wine for the Liturgy are preserved. They are usually placed on a plate.



Boat: The incense boat is also a cup-like metal vessel used to hold the incense, a granulated substance which, when burned emits an aromatic smoke. It symbolizes the zeal with which the faithful should be consumed, the good odor of Christian virtues, and the ascent of prayer to God.



Hand Cross: This is a cross held by the celebrant during the Liturgy.

Holy Water Pot: The metal vessel used to hold the holy water in blessing the congregation by means of a sprinkler is called the holy water pot. The sprinkler is known as an aspergillum.



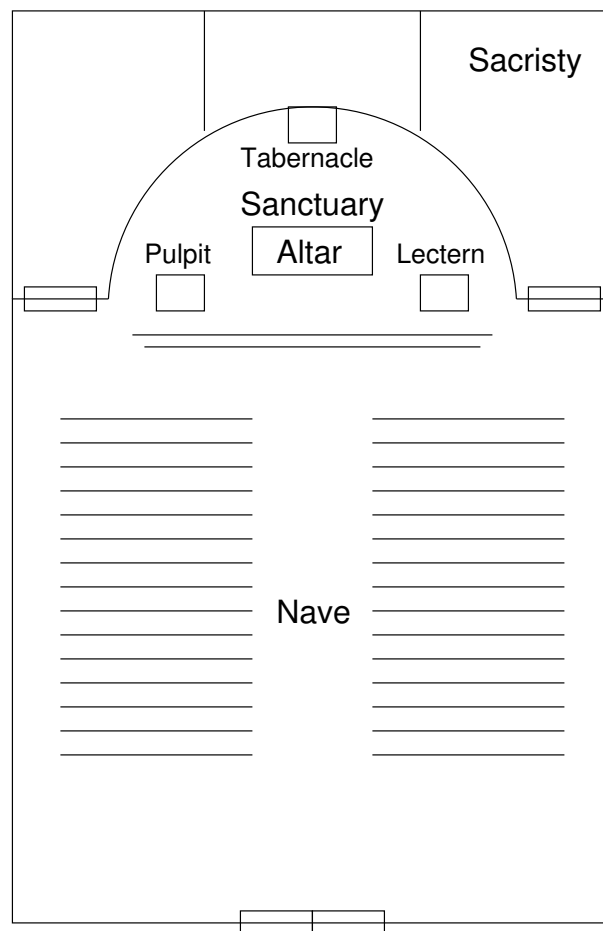
Censer: The censer or thurible is a metal vessel with a perforated cover and suspended in which incense is burned. It is used during Divine Liturgies, Benediction and Exposition of Blessed Sacrament. In it, the charcoal is burned to give furnace to consume the incense.



Processional Cross: The cross is the crucifix mounted on a pole and carried at the head of processions. During the Seasons of the Resurrection and the Holy Cross, there is no corpus on the cross.

Qurbano Book: This is the book of general instruction for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. It also contains the official prayers of the liturgy.

B.3 Church Locations



Main Altar: The chief and fixed Altar in the church usually mounted by steps and in the middle of the sanctuary. The Hebrew word for altar literally means “a place of sacrifice.” The New Testament altar is a table where the Divine Liturgy is offered. The parts of the altar are the

Mensa: Literally, a table. In liturgical language, the mensa is the flat table-top of the fixed altar.

Tabernacle: A precious kind of safe where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. It is located at the center of the High Altar and is made of high quality metal-plated with gold and furnished with ornament and decoration.

Altar steps: The stairways to the High Altar where altar servers bow.

Altar-Crucifix: The large crucifix located above the Altar and Tabernacle.

Lectern: A reading stand where the lector reads the Epistle.

Pulpit: The term was derived from the Latin word *pulpitum* meaning a “stage” or “scaffold.” From it the Scriptures are proclaimed and sermons preached. It is also called the “ambo.”

Side Altar: A side table where the gifts are prepared.

Nave: The part of the church containing pews. It is used by the congregation during the Liturgy.

Sacristy: The sacristy is a room located behind the sanctuary. It is used by the religious and altar servers for storing their garments for the Liturgy and where they don and doff these garments.

Sanctuary: The sanctuary is the portion of the Church where the High Altar is located, extending to the steps to the nave. Besides the altar, it should be furnished with a seating for the clergy, and seats or benches for the altar servers. It is also called presbyterium.

Sanctuary lamp: The vessel containing the candle which is left burning to indicate that our Lord is present in the Tabernacle of the Altar. It symbolizes the light of faith and of Christ in the world.

Appendix C

Glossary

Alb: A long white robe worn over regular clothing that can be used by all liturgical ministers.

Ambo (Pulpit): A sacred place from which the word of God is proclaimed. It is reserved for the readings, the psalm, and the Easter Proclamation, but may also be used for the homily and general intercessions.

Congregation: The people of God gathered for prayer and worship.

Crozier: A staff resembling a shepherd's crook carried a bishop as a symbol of his office.



Book of the Gospels: The book containing the gospels that is carried in procession each Sunday and from which the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel.

Chalice: The cup used to hold the wine for consecration during Liturgy.

Ciborium: A covered bowl used to hold consecrated hosts after Liturgy.

Intinction Set: A container for the Eucharist used by concelebrants, deacons, and subdeacons during the Liturgy.



Parts of the Liturgy The Liturgy is divided into four main parts.

Introductory Rites The parts of the Liturgy before the scripture reading, from the entrance song through the opening prayer.

Liturgy of the Word The part of the Liturgy from the reading through the Nicene Creed.

Anaphora The part of the Liturgy from the preparation of the gifts through the prayer after communion.

Concluding Rite The priest's greeting and blessing and the dismissal of the assembly.

Pyx: A container used by the clergy in transporting the Eucharist, usually to a hospital or nursing home.



Rubrics: Rules or instructions for how to perform an action during the Liturgy.

Appendix D

Promotional Ceremony

The following may be modified as the pastor sees fit.

Celebrant: Let them stand and be examined who are to enter or advance in the ranks in the Society of the Knights of the Altar of *(name of church)* Church, who will serve at the Divine Liturgy, assist at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and take an active part in other Church functions.

Celebrant: Do you promise to be present on time for each and every assignment you will have as a Knight of the Altar, and to be neat and clean as this privilege demands?

Servers: We do so promise.

Celebrant: Do you promise to serve so devoutly as to be a help to the devotion and prayer of all who watch you represent them at the altar?

Servers: We do so promise.

Celebrant: Do you promise to conduct yourselves outside the church in a way that will make all proud to have you as their representative in assisting the priest at God's Altar?

Servers: With God's help and the example and prayers of our fellow members, we do so promise.

Celebrant: May Almighty God be witness to your intentions.

Apprentice

Celebrant: Let those come forward who have been approved to enter the rank of Apprentice of the Knights of the Altar.

(All becoming Apprentices step forward one step.)

Apprentices: I, _____, will be faithful to my training as a Knight of the Altar. I understand my obligations and responsibilities, and hereby promise commitment to do my best at all times.

Celebrant: You have made a pledge to study what it means to serve at the Altar, to learn the responses and the rubrics, and to take on the responsibilities of becoming a Knight of the Altar. May God grant you his grace and goodness, so that you may persevere in your good intentions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Each server becoming an Apprentice receives his certificate from the celebrant and returns to his place.)

(When all Apprentices have received their certificates they step back in line.)

Page

Celebrant: Let those come forward who have been approved to enter the rank of Page of the Knights of the Altar.

(All becoming Pages step forward one step.)

Celebrant: Wear this alb in which you are vested with the greatest respect, for it is part of the armor you shall wear as a Knight of the Altar in the service of your Lord and Master Jesus Christ. May our Lord clothe you with the grace you need for your new dignity as His servant, just as you will now be clothed in this alb. May you prove yourselves worthy by the proof of your life, and may its whiteness be ever a true symbol of the gleaming purity of your soul.

Pages: I, _____, will be faithful to my training as a Knight of the Altar. I understand my obligations and responsibilities, and hereby renew my commitment to do my best at all times.

Celebrant: May God grant you his grace and goodness, so that you may persevere in your good intentions.

(Each server becoming a Page receives his certificate from the celebrant and returns to his place.)

(When all Pages have received their certificates they step back in line.)

(All servers bow together and return to their benches/seats, placing their certificates there and remain standing.)

Knights, Knight Captains, and Knight Commanders

Celebrant: Let those come forward who are to take the Membership Pledge as full Knights in the Society of the Knights of the Altar.

(All becoming Knights step forward one step.)

Knights: I, _____, hereby pledge my service to Almighty God and his Holy Church by observing faithfully the rules and obligations of the Knights of the Altar, and I promise to be a loyal member at all times.

Celebrant: On behalf of the Knights of the Altar, I accept your pledge and exhort you to persevere in your good intentions; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Each server becoming a **Knight** receives his pin and certificate from the celebrant and returns to his place.)*

(When all have received their certificates they step back in line.)

Grand Knights

Celebrant: Let those come forward who have been promoted to the highest rank of Knighthood, and who have shown by their devotion and by their example that they deserve to receive the Knights' Cross, the emblem of their service as a Knight of the Altar.

*(All becoming Grand Knights step forward one step.)
(The celebrant blesses the new cross, removes the Knight's wooden cross, and places the new cross on the Grand Knight. The Grand Knight then receives his certificate.)*

Celebrant: Receive the Cross of Jesus Crucified, Whom you profess to serve through your dedication as a Knight of the Altar. Let it remind you of your duties in His Service, inspiring you to a chivalrous life of virtue and the profession of your holy Catholic Faith. May His Immaculate Mother be your protection and guiding star.

Knights: I, _____, hereby renew my pledge of service to Almighty God and his Holy Church by observing faithfully the rules and obligations of the Society of the Knights of the Altar. I promise as Grand Knight, to serve Christ my King as Lord of Lords with fidelity and honor. Mary, His Immaculate Mother, shall be my Queen and my Lady, and I shall be her devoted champion. I further promise to treat others with respect and justice, to live an upright personal life, and to profess and defend the rights of God and His Holy Church.

(The Grand Knight receives his certificate.)

Celebrant: On behalf of the Knights of the Altar, I accept your pledge as Grand Knight and I exhort you to persevere in your good intentions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(After the Grand Knights have received their certificates, they step back in line.)
(All servers bow together and return to their benches/seats, placing their certificates there and remain standing.)*

Appendix E

Prayers

Prayer Before the Liturgy

Open my mouth, O Lord, to bless Your Holy Name. Cleanse my heart from all evil and distracting thoughts. Enlighten my understanding and inflame my will that I may serve more worthily at Your holy altar. O Mary, Mother of Christ the High Priest, obtain for me the most important grace of knowing my vocation in life. Grant me a true spirit of faith and humble obedience so that I may ever behold the priest as a representative of God and willingly follow him in the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Christ. Amen.

Prayer After the Liturgy

O Lord, Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest, I thank You for the privilege of having served at the holy altar of Your sacrifice. Now, as I put aside the garments of that service, I ask that I may at all times think of You, and always act accordingly, as a privileged altar server. May I ever seek You and find You; may I always follow You; may Your priestly spirit be my guide, and Your service of love be my example. May Your Holy Name always be on my lips, and to Your praise and glory may every work of mine be done. Ever ready in Your service, may I always know and do Your Holy Will in all things. May I remain pure and blameless and be found worthy to be Your servant, and by Your grace may I persevere to the end. Amen.

Opening Prayer Before Meetings

Enlighten our minds, and strengthen our wills so that we may have a right understanding and good judgment in all things and that all our thoughts, words, and actions may be pleasing to God and profitable to our Salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayer After Meetings

Grant us, O Lord, the help of Your grace to carry out faithfully and successfully all those things which, through Your inspiration we know ought to be done, always to be loyal to our society, its purposes, and its Constitutions. Amen.