



CEREMONY OF ENROLMENT OF ALTAR SERVERS INTO THE GUILD OF ST. STEPHEN

CALLING OF THE CANDIDATES

The rite takes place after the Gospel. The congregation sits, and candidates are called forward - either as a group or by name.

Parish MC: Let those who are called to the ministry of serving at the altar please come forward: (N. and N.)

The candidates stand before the celebrant.

Celebrant: What do you ask of God's Church?

Candidates: **The blessing of Almighty God and enrolment into the Guild of Saint Stephen for Altar Servers.**

Celebrant: Do you recommend their admission to the Guild?

Parish MC: Reverend Father(s) (Deacons) and parishioners of (parish name), these young members of our parish have completed a probationary period of service at the altar of our church. They have shown themselves to be reverent in their actions, regular in their attendance and to have an understanding of the Mass - and most importantly - a love of the Lord Jesus, whom they now seek to serve as members of the Guild.

The candidates sit. The celebrant addresses them in these or similar words (which may be combined with a longer homily).

Celebrant: Dear servers, you have heard the recommendation made on your behalf by our Parish MC. Before you undertake this commitment, may I remind you - and indeed all servers present - that the worship of the Church is centred on the celebration of administration of the Sacraments. Those who are ordained for this are the bishop, the priest and the deacon. But, from earliest times, the Church has called other Christians to assist at these services, principally to help the ordained ministers, but also to be at the service of the entire Christian community. To be called to assist the Church in this manner is a privileged function and should be carried out to the best of one's ability. You must always try to serve in such a way to help everyone in the church to pray.

Remember, always, the promises that you are about to make:

- To serve regularly, at the times when you are asked,
- To serve with care and reverence, and, above all,
- To serve with understanding.

A good server is the one who not only knows what to do, but also understands why it is being done. Try to learn more about the worship of the Church, in which you are being called to participate in a privileged way.

BLESSING OF THE CANDIDATES

The candidates kneel before the celebrant.

Celebrant: My dear people, let us pray for those who wish to be enrolled into the Guild of Saint Stephen. Let us ask God to bless them.

(Pause for silent prayer.)

Heavenly Father,
bless ✠ these servers,
who have been chosen to be members of the Guild of Saint Stephen.
Grant that they may be faithful in their service at your altar,
and that they may grow in faith and love.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

CANDIDATES' PROMISES

The candidates stand.

Celebrant: Will you try to say the Guild prayer every day?

Candidates: **I will, with the help of God.**

Celebrant: Will you promise to do your best to serve regularly, particularly when you are needed?

Candidates: **I will, with the help of God.**

Celebrant: Will you promise to serve with care and reverence?

Candidates: **I will, with the help of God.**

Celebrant: Will you try to understand what you are doing when you serve?

Candidates: **I will, with the help of God.**

GUILD PROMISE

Celebrant: I now invite all enrolled members of the Guild to stand and join with those to be enrolled in making the Guild promise.

Servers: **I offer myself to God Almighty,
to Blessed Mary our Mother
and to our holy patron, Saint Stephen,
and I promise to do my best
to serve regularly with reverence and understanding,
for the glory of God, the service of his Church
and my own eternal salvation.**

BLESSING OF THE MEDALS

The celebrant prays with hands outstretched over the bronze guild medals.

Celebrant: Blessed are you, Lord of all creation.
You have made us in your image and likeness
and have placed us over all creation to use it for your glory.
We ask you to bless ✠ these medals,
which your servers will wear as a sign of their loyal service.
(The medals are sprinkled with holy water.)
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

The celebrant places a bronze medal around the neck of each server.

Celebrant: **N.** receive this medal as a sign of your admission into the Guild of Saint Stephen that, with the help of his prayers, you may lead a good and holy life.

Server: **Amen.**

The newly-enrolled sign the Parish Enrolment Register.

Celebrant: I now welcome you as members of the Guild of Saint Stephen.

CONCLUSION

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you came into this world to serve others, rather than to be served,
and showed yourself to Saint Stephen in your glory at the right hand
of the Father.

We ask you now to grant to your altar servers
the faith of Saint Stephen as they serve you in the Blessed Sacrament,
so that they too may come to see you in your glory.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

GUILD HYMN TO SAINT STEPHEN

– C. Meyer SJ

1. Holy Stephen, Christ's dear martyr,
first to shed thy blood for Him.
What bright glory now surrounds thee?
Glory which no time can dim!
That we could share that glory;
give for Him our life and blood!
Let us praise thy noble story,
told with life's own crimson flood.

2. Noble witness thou didst render
to the Passion of thy Lord;
bearing with a love courageous,
weight of stones more cruel than sword.
Mindful of our dying Saviour,
begging mercy in death's throes,
thou didst raise thine eyes to heaven,
craving mercy on thy foes.

3. Ours it may not be to suffer
like Saint Stephen unto death,
but a service we can render
to our last and failing breath:
ours to serve our loving Saviour,
ours to help His sacrifice,
ours to give Him daily homage,
till He calls to paradise.