

COMBINED RITE OF
CEREMONY OF ENROLMENT OF ALTAR SERVERS
INTO THE GUILD OF ST. STEPHEN
WITH THE BLESSING AND PRESENTATION OF THE
ARCHCONFRATERNITY'S SPECIAL MEDALS

The enrolment of altar servers into the Guild of St. Stephen usually takes place at Mass, normally on the Feast of St. Stephen, or otherwise preferably a Votive Mass of St. Stephen. This rite combines enrolment of new servers with the presentation of special medals for service at the altar.

A Silver Medal is awarded for 10 years of service as an enrolled member of the Guild.

A Silver Medal of Merit is awarded for 20 years of service.

A Gold Medal of Merit is awarded for 50 years of service.

A Gold Medal is awarded for 50 years of service as an enrolled member of the Guild.

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 - by the Parish MC.:

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

Once all Candidates are standing before the celebrant, he asks:

What do you ask of God's Church?

The candidates respond:

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

The celebrant asks:

Do you recommend their admission to the Guild?

The Parish M.C. responds:

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, 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 - where possible, on seats prepared for them in the Sanctuary.

The celebrant addresses the Candidates in these or similar words (which may be combined with a longer homily):

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, who says:

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.

R Amen.

The candidates stand. The celebrant questions the candidates:

Will you try to say the Guild prayer every day?

R I will, with the help of God.

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

R I will, with the help of God.

Will you promise to serve with care and reverence?

R I will, with the help of God.

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

R I will, with the help of God.

BLESSING OF THOSE TO BE PRESENTED WITH SPECIAL MEDALS

The celebrant introduces the presentation of special medals in these of similar words:

It is customary to recognise loyal service by the presentation of awards.

Today we are also here to bestow the Archconfraternity's Gold/Silver Medal (of Merit) on **N.** in recognition of **x.** years of regular serving.

The people are invited to pray:

My dear people, let us pray for **N.**, that God may pour out his abundant blessings upon him/her and give him/her strength to continue in service at his altar.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Heavenly Father,

bless **N.** ✠ as we acknowledge his/her faithful service as a member of the Guild here at **(Name of Church)**.

Grant that, continuing in this ministry,

he/she may grow in faith and love,

and by example always give glory to your name.

This through Christ our Lord.

℟ Amen.

GUILD PROMISE

The celebrant addresses all the altar servers present.

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

The servers say together:

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

With hands outstretched over all the guild medals, the celebrant prays:

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.

℟ Amen.

The Celebrant places a bronze medal around the neck of each new server, saying:
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.
R. Amen.

The newly-enrolled sign the Parish Enrolment Register.

The celebrant declares:

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

PRESENTATION OF THE SPECIAL MEDALS

The recipient comes forward and kneels or stands before the celebrant, who says:

N. receive this Silver/Gold Medal (of Merit) in recognition of your loyal service at the Altar of God. With the help of our Patron, St. Stephen, continue to serve for the glory of God, the service of his Church and your own eternal salvation.

R. Amen.

CONCLUSION

The celebrant invites all to prayer:

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.

R. Amen.