



In the name of The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God Amen.

Updated September 2025



“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 3:13)

Altar Service Checklist

Before & During the Service:

- ✓ **Arrive Early:** Arrive at least 15-20 minutes before the service starts. “I love those who love me; And those who seek me early and diligently will find me.” Proverbs 8:17.
- ✓ **Sound System:** Turn on the sound system and ensure all microphones have fully charged batteries.
- ✓ **Candles for Matins and Vespers:** Prepare the three good candles.
- ✓ **Altar Table Candles:** Light the altar table candles.
- ✓ **7-Candle Stand:** Prepare and light the 7-candle stand (main altar only).
- ✓ **Wine Preparation for the liturgy:** Fill the wine cruet (big for weekends, small for weekdays).
- ✓ **Water Bottles:** Fill all water bottles before the liturgy prayers begin, including those for washing the holy pots and sprinkling the congregation. This ensures the water attends all prayers and maintains a comfortable room temperature.
- ✓ **Prospharin Setup:** When setting up or unfolding the Prospharin, ensure the icon image faces Abouna’s side.
- ✓ **Censer Charcoals:** Prepare the censer charcoals. Light two charcoals 3-4 minutes before Matins/Vespers.
 - Use a candle to light the charcoal inside the Shoria.
 - Avoid using the altar table candles.
 - Ensure the charcoal’s dent or scoop side faces up.
 - When presenting the Shoria to Abouna, hold it closely beside the incense box.

- Check the charcoal inside the Shoria before presenting it, as ashes can prevent the incense from burning properly.

- ✓ **Korban Box:** Bring the Korban box from the Korban room and keep it inside a plastic bag and towel until the end of Agpeya prayers.
- ✓ **Korban After Offering:** After the offering of the Lamb, place the Korban on a plastic bag to prevent drying out.
- ✓ **Departure Paper:** Bring the departure paper from the back of the church before the Commemoration of the Saints.
- ✓ **Water Tray:** Ensure the water tray at the end of the church is ready with enough cups for the congregation to drink after communion.
- ✓ **Bishop Attendance:** When a Bishop attends the liturgy, include soap with the water container: warm water + soap + towel. Ensure the water is suitably warm (not cold or hot) for Saydna to wash his hands.
- ✓ **Wine Bottle:** Wash the wine bottle after use (after the Offering of the Lamb prayers) and store it on the tray inside the closet.

Before and During Communion:

- ✓ **Red Lefafa Setup:** Set up the red lefafa on the top of the communion table before communion starts, placing it on the right side with the glossy side facing up. After Abouna has completed giving communion to the congregation, fold the lefafa properly into whole diagonal triangles (end corner to end corner).
- ✓ **Red Towel Placement:** Place the red towel at the corner of the altar table after the Confession prayer is completed.
- ✓ **Handling Altar Lefafa:** Before communion starts, refrain from pulling the altar lefafa. Only Abouna should handle the lefafa on the altar and then hand it to the serving deacons.
- ✓ **Covering the Throne:** After Abouna completely removes the chalice from the throne, cover the throne with the red lefafa. There is no urgency to cover it immediately, as doing so can distract Abouna and sometimes cause the edge of the lefafa to touch the blood in the chalice.
- ✓ **During Communion:** As soon as Abouna returns to the altar after giving communion to the congregation, the deacon should leave the lefafa and the cross, and only hold the candle beside Abouna until he finishes all the body. Then, the deacon should say “Sheri Pi-Estavros.” Do not direct Abouna’s attention to any leftover parts of the holy body unless Abouna asks.

- ✓ **Water Bottles for Sprinkling:** Ensure you have suitable size and number of bottles for Abouna to sprinkle water on the congregation at the end of the service. If Abouna is carrying a small bottle, a deacon should follow him with another/second water bottle.
- ✓ **Altar Responses:** Deacons should chant altar responses in the language they feel comfortable with, even if it is different from Abouna's prayer language.
- ✓ **Distribution of Eulogia:** Adult or youth deacons should help Abouna during the distribution of the eulogia, possibly using the high table with wheels, as it is too heavy for the kids to handle.

After the conclusion of the Service:

- ✓ **Put Altar Books:** Return all altar books and microphones to the North chorus.
- ✓ **Communion Assistance:** Pay attention to Abouna during communion in case he needs anything.
- ✓ **Dry Altar Vessels:** Dry off altar vessels and place all altar linens and vessels in their designated box.
- ✓ **Extinguish Candles:** Put out all the candles.
- ✓ **Clean the Censer:** Empty the charcoal into the dedicated charcoal bin. Ensure the shoria stand, charcoal basket, and glass cups are clean. Do not mix up the garbage bin and the charcoal bin to avoid fire hazards.
- ✓ **Empty Water Cruets:** Empty the water cruets into a plant and store them on their shelf (located beside the sink).
- ✓ **Turn Off Lights and Sound System:** Turn off the lights and the sound system.
- ✓ **Altar Tablet –** Put on charger in Northside corner closet (main altar).
- ✓ **Gooseneck Mics – Place on chargers:**
 - One in Northside corner closet
 - One in men's altar closet
- ✓ **Quick Carpet Clean – After *Ologia*:**
 - Vacuum crumbs where Abouna distributes it.
 - Vacuum is in the men's altar closet—return it to the charger after use.

Additional Notes:

1. **Conduct During Service:**
 - Abstain from excessive movement, talking, or signaling. All movements should be performed in silence and meekness.

- Deacons should not sit inside the altar while Abouna is standing and praying during the liturgy.
2. **Sound System Operation:** Inside the left-side altar where the spare batteries are located, there is a panel on the wall with an array of labeled buttons. One of them says "SOUND SYSTEM." When the light is red, the system is ON. When the light is green, the system is OFF.
 3. **Altar Service Checklist:** The altar service checklist is posted to the back of the door where the spare batteries are located.
 4. **Procession of Incense with Abouna:**
 - **During the Procession:**
 - Hold the Cross and the Gospel (unless a Bishop instructs otherwise).
 - Recite/pray silently the responses of the litanies prayed by the priest during the procession:
 1. Peace in the world and the church.
 2. The Pope, the Bishops, and the fathers.
 3. The Assemblies (meetings) of the church.
 - **After Completing the Procession:**
 - After the third round, bow down at the right-hand sidestep of the altar, then enter **directly** to the altar to place the Cross and the Gospel on the altar table. Avoid waiting or standing at the altar corner.