

SJV Alter Server Ministry Program
2/15/18

Vision Statement:

The Altar Server ministry at Saint John Vianney is a community of blessed youth and parents who have been called by the lord to serve at the weekly masses; to assist the priests of our parish, serve the liturgy of holy mass and evangelize through our prayerfulness. Pope Francis said in his speech to the Altar Servers on Aug 4, 2015 “the closer you are to the altar the more you will remember to speak to Jesus in daily prayer” and serving the community at the sacred mass is a concrete way for our youth to share the beautiful blessing of our catholic faith.

Being altar server is call to prayer and mission, pope says

Aug 4, 2015

Serving at the altar, the pope told the young people, is a privileged way to draw closer to Jesus, which in turn "enables you to open yourselves to others, to journey together, to set demanding goals and to find the strength to achieve them."

"The closer you are to the altar," he told them, "the more you will remember to speak with Jesus in daily prayer; the more you will be nourished by the word and the body of the Lord, the better able you will be to go out to others, bringing them the gift that you have received, giving in turn with enthusiasm the joy you have received."

Pope Francis' Address to Altar Servers

“If we do not resist him, Jesus will touch our lips with the flame of his merciful love, as he did to the prophet Isaiah”

[AUGUST 04, 2015 16:53 ZENIT STAFF POPE AND HOLY SEE](#)

Below is the Vatican-provided translation of Pope Francis' address to thousands of altar servers from various countries in St. Peter's Square tonight:

Dear Altar Servers, Good evening.

I thank you all for coming in such great numbers; you have withstood the heat of the sun in Rome in August. I thank Bishop Nemet, your President, for his words of introduction and greeting. You have come from a variety of countries on pilgrimage to Rome, the city where the Apostles Peter and Paul were martyred.

It is important to realize that being close to Jesus and knowing him in the Eucharist through your service at the altar, enables you to open yourselves to others, to journey together, to set demanding goals and to find the strength to achieve them. It is a source of real joy to recognize that we are small and weak, all the while knowing that, with Jesus' help, we can be strengthened and take up the challenge of life's great journey in his company.

The prophet Isaiah also discovered this truth, which is to say that God purified his intentions, forgave his sins, healed his heart and made him ready to take up the important task of bringing God's word to his people. In so doing, he became an instrument of the presence of divine mercy. Isaiah realized that, by entrusting himself into the hands of the Lord, his whole existence would be transformed.

The biblical verse that we have just heard speaks to us precisely of this. Isaiah had a vision of the glory of the Lord. At the same time, the vision showed to him that, although the Lord revealed himself, he still remained far off.

Isaiah was astonished to discover that it was God who made the first move. God is the one drawing close. He noticed that God's actions were not impeded by his imperfections; it was God's goodness alone that enabled him to take up the mission, transforming him into a totally new person and therefore one able to respond to the call of the Lord, saying, "Here I am! Send me" (*Is* 6:8).

You are more fortunate today than the prophet Isaiah. In the Eucharist and in the other sacraments, you experience the intimate closeness of Jesus, the sweetness and power of his presence. You do not encounter Jesus placed on an inaccessibly high throne, but in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. *His word does not shake the doorposts, but rather caresses the strings of the heart.* Like Isaiah, each of you sees that God, although making himself close to us in Jesus and bending down towards you with love, remains always immeasurably greater, beyond our ability to understand him in his deepest being. Like Isaiah, you too have experienced that it is always God who takes the lead, because it is he who created you and willed you into being. It is he who, in your baptism, has made you into a new creation; he is always patiently

waiting for your response to his initiative, offering forgiveness to whoever asks him in humility.

If we do not resist him, Jesus will touch our lips with the flame of his merciful love, as he did to the prophet Isaiah. This will make us worthy to receive him and to bring him to our brothers and sisters. Like Isaiah, we too are invited to not remain closed in on ourselves, protecting our faith in an underground bunker to which we flee in difficult moments. Rather, we are called to share the joy of knowing we are chosen and saved by God's mercy, the joy of being witnesses to the fact that faith gives new direction to our steps, that it makes us free and strong so as to be ready and able for mission.

How beautiful it is to realize that faith brings us out of ourselves, out of our isolation. Precisely because we are filled with the joy of being friends with Jesus Christ, faith draws us towards others, making us natural missionaries!

Dear altar boys and altar girls, the closer you are to the altar, the more you will remember to speak with Jesus in daily prayer; the more you will be nourished by the Word and the Body of the Lord, the better able you will be to go out to others, bringing them the gift that you have received, giving in turn with enthusiasm the joy you have received.

Thank you for serving at the Lord's altar and for making of this service a real school of learning the faith, and charity toward your neighbour. Thank you also for having begun to respond to the Lord, like the prophet Isaiah, "Here I am. Send me" (*Is* 6:8).