

Nine Commandments for Altar Guilds

- If it's metal, polish it.
- If it's floral, arrange it.
- If it's cloth, iron it.
- If it has been taken care of by one person for more than ten years, avoid it.
- If it's a memorial, revere it or try to work around it.
- If it's been done only one way for more than five years, don't try to change it.
- If new rectors, vicars, or curates get bright ideas, indulge them. They'll soon learn better.
- If a bishop wants all the vestments and hangings changed ten minutes before the service, smile sweetly, ask him to pray for a speedy recovery from your hearing loss, and leave him to his prayers in the solitude of the sacristy.

-via St. Mary's Church, Madisonville, Kentucky

Dear Friends,

One of the tasks I do during the summer is the cleaning out of file cabinets. It is amazing what one finds hidden away there: I came across the leaflet from the 1992 Rededication Service for the Church, a 1986 letter of resignation I gave to an employer when I felt the employment practices were unfair (I'm not sure how that ended up here in one of my church files....), and many interesting articles about a variety of church-related items, which I will share with you in the months to come.

One such piece is the *Nine Commandments for Altar Guilds* printed above. How good to have a little chuckle early in the morning – and yet as any Guild Member would tell you, there is much truth within it! Altar Guild is an honored and essential ministry of the Church. The women (and man) who serve on our Guild do so faithfully, conscientiously, and I imagine, with a bit of humor, as one never knows quite what to expect on a Sunday morning. Some of our Guild members have been quietly doing their work for years; that leaflet from 1992? All of the acolytes, chalice bearers, greeters, and lectors had changed – but listed for Altar Guild were Pam Diamond, Ann Miller, and Barbara Raspanti. Pam and Ann still serve, and Barbara has recently stepped down after a move with her husband.

Where am I going with this? Here it is: as faithful as are our members, they do eventually need to step away from this ministry. We are needing some parishioners (women or men) who might like to try out this sacred work. The commitment is usually on duty one week of the month, with some added time at Christmas and Easter or other special events. You serve on a team, which is very helpful in learning the ins and outs, and is helpful if you need to be absent because of travels, illness, or whatever!

Do think and pray about this. What happens on Sunday doesn't just magically (or mysteriously) "happen"; all who come into our beautiful nave rely on the goodness of the Guild to set the tone for our community worship. You may speak with me or our Directress, Phyllis Edwards; we would be delighted to tell you all about this incredible opportunity to serve.

Peace,

Mother Lisa+