

My name is Francine Gawadzyn. I am involved in the ministry of the Altar Society. It was 16 years ago when I saw a need for Sacristy cleaning in the Sunday bulletin. I had been searching for a way to give back to the church, for all of the blessings in my life, and I felt that this was the perfect opportunity. At first, I was nervous because I had never been involved in the church before, other than attending mass every week. However, I saw this as a perfect opportunity for myself to grow spiritually. I knew that God would help me through this new experience, and 16 years later, I have had no regrets.

Besides taking care of my family, being a part of the Altar Society is the most important and fulfilling work that I do. I take great pride in my work at the church. Being a part of the Altar Society, is all behind the scenes, however I do believe that it is just as important as the other ministries within the church. I would often bring my mother and my children with me to help with Sacristy cleaning. As a result they grew deeper in their faith, just as I have and continue to do. This experience has made me feel so comfortable and so welcomed in the church, it gives me such joy to be involved within this ministry.

The duties of the Altar Society are not demanding. They call for a team of two people a week, who are responsible for cleaning the vessels, the glass doors, wiping the woodwork in the Sacristy as well as in the Sanctuary, wiping the altars, washing the Holy water basins along with filling them with fresh Holy water, washing the glass candle tops, in addition to a few other duties. Working with a partner would mean that Sacristy cleaning should not take more than 1 hour of your time. Each week teams rotate, however some people enjoy the experience so much that they choose to help more often.

I prepare a yearly schedule to inform everyone when they are supposed to clean as well as who they will be working with. Some of the members choose to work with their spouse, child or even a friend. Through the years, we have had many people come and go for one reason or another. However the time that they provided was greatly appreciated.

For those of you who are currently helping with the Altar Society, I thank you so much - Forchie Vacilotto, Lena Gumierato, Janine Theriault, Garnet and Dianne Fox, Josephine Bolger, Carmen Muscat and Donna Bendeck. Not only do I appreciate your help with this work, everyone is thankful, especially God. You are carrying out such humbling work and you should all be very proud of yourselves.

I encourage all of you to try to become involved in any ministry in this church, I promise that your life will never be the same, just as I have experienced in my involvement.

Thank you & God bless!!

Francine