



Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur

(USKUP AGUNG KUALA LUMPUR)

528, Jalan Bukit Nanas, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Tel: 603-2078 8828 / 2078 5089 / 2072 6606

Fax: 603-2031 3815

Email: archbishop@archkl.org

Website: www.archkl.org

25th November 2019

Pastoral Letter - Permission for Female Altar Servers

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings of peace as we come to the close of our liturgical year and the beginning of a new year with the First Sunday of Advent.

The holy season of Advent carries various important themes of hope, love, joy and peace. It also marks a new beginning and reminds us that renewal is essential to us welcoming the Christ child into our lives as we join Saint John the Baptist to “prepare the way of the Lord.”

It is in this spirit that I wish to make known to you my decision to allow female altar servers to serve at the altar of the Eucharist throughout the Archdiocese. This decision comes after consultation with members of the Presbyterium and having considered the current practice in the two suffragan dioceses of Penang and Melaka-Johor.

The admission of girls to the ministry of altar servers was made possible in 1994, when the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments announced an authentic interpretation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, stating that canon 230 §2 permits lay men and women to be altar servers. The interpretation, confirmed by Pope Saint John Paul II, allowed individual diocesan bishops to decide whether to allow female altar servers, considering the “sensibilities of the faithful”.

Even though it is considered appropriate to “follow the noble tradition of having boys serve at the altar since this has led to a reassuring development of priestly vocations”, the spirit of complementarity and service can only enhance the life of the local Church. It is also important that boys and girls be afforded the opportunity at an early age to have an active role in the celebration of the Eucharist.

I am aware that logistically not all parishes are presently prepared to handle both boys and girls for this ministry, but it is our intention to move towards this integration and provide the necessary arrangements to make this a reality.

This permission will take effect from the First Sunday of Advent, provided that parishes are ready for implementation based on the conditions set out in the Chancery Notice and guidelines issued by the Archdiocesan Liturgical Ministry for the purpose of safeguarding vulnerable persons and establishing liturgical norms.

It is my hope that both boys and girls will be trained well to serve at the table of the Lord, grow to have a profound and deep love for the Eucharist, and be inspired to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.

As we faithfully await for the coming of the Lord this Advent, may our Altar Servers wait on Him faithfully during our Eucharistic celebrations.

+ Most Reverend Julian Leow Beng Kim, D.D.
Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur