

## Did You Know? An Anglican Glossary

### Acolyte

(Gk. akolouthos, L. acolutus: a follower.)



Priest training two acolytes. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Ann Arbor, MI., 1944.

From the third century “acolyte” was the highest of the four minor orders leading to the priesthood in the Western Church, and was first mentioned in a letter of Pope Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch (Patriarch in 253) in 252. In time, the subdeacons and acolytes took on most of the functions of the other minor orders. Acolytes were found in Africa under St. Cyprian of Carthage (d.258).

Duties of the acolyte are to assist the priest with the preparation of the chalice, to light the candles, carry the processional cross, move the missal and help in other ways as required. In England, they were also known as clerks and had other responsibilities,

In the Anglican Church, the duties of the acolyte are performed by laymen or by boys.