

Liturgical Minister Guidelines

For all Ministers

For most of my life I equated ministry with volunteerism: I opted to perform a ministry [serving, lectoring, etc.] inasmuch as I opted to volunteer [raking leaves, thanksgiving baskets]. Ministry is so much more than simply helping; it is the very heartbeat of the Church. I have grown to appreciate that ministry is less about what we accomplish and more about what God accomplishes through our ministry. While we are there to feed the hungry, to lector at mass, and to take communion to the homebound, ultimately, it is God working through our ministry to reach the people we encounter. Consider how this forms your ministry during the Liturgy of the Eucharist and what encounter God is trying to make through it.

Every sacrament marks a point in time when God encounters His people. Our ministry at the altar will either assist or hinder that encounter. Our actions and practices can help open people's minds and hearts to God speaking to them or distract them from that voice. It is in light of this that I am sharing with you several thoughts to help guide your ministry at the celebration of the Eucharist.

Pray First

Before mass begins take a moment to thank God for the opportunity to minister at mass. Thanksgiving nurtures our humility; humility makes way for God to work through us. It's what we should all be striving to do.

Before mass can be hectic. Your ministry is a call to help God encounter His people. Whether at home or in church, make sure to take time to pray and reflect on what you're about to do and what God desires to do through your ministry.

Movement is distracting

Movement naturally draws our attention. We are wise enough to avoid reading a book at a bustling playground. Likewise, we should be considerate of those who are praying during mass. If we are moving during the Eucharistic liturgy, we have to be deliberate and thoughtful when we do.

Try to move when the congregation moves. After the opening prayer, while the congregation is sitting down, is the perfect time for the lector to move to the ambo. The lector wouldn't start the reading while everyone is being seated because movement is distracting. When everyone is seated, we know they're ready to focus on the Word.

When this is unavoidable, moving prayerfully becomes very important. Keeping your hands folded in prayer, taking time to bow to the altar, to the tabernacle, to the sanctuary, and being mindful that you're carrying the Body of Christ in your hands are ways that we can maintain a prayerful presence so that our movement, while noticed, won't distract.

The Sanctuary is Holy Ground

What we do, and how we do it, will either create a prayerful atmosphere around the space of the Sanctuary or work against it. Moses removed his sandals for he was on Holy Ground. The Apostles fell prostrate at the transfiguration. We don't have to do that, but through some of the simplest practices we can create a peaceful, beautiful, prayerful, atmosphere in the space around the tabernacle and the Altar.

Please be thoughtful and respectful in how you use the Sanctuary. Make an act of reverence when entering and leaving the Sanctuary. Make sure to reverence the altar/tabernacle before/after you approach them. Please don't use the Sanctuary as a cut-through to get to the Sacristy.

Dress appropriately

What we wear matters. Businesses ask their employees to adhere to dress codes because the business is judged by the people who represent it. The Lector speaks on behalf of the Word of God in Scripture; a Eucharistic Minister presents the Body of Christ to others. How does your attire represent your ministry?

Consider the effect it would have, should you decide to distribute the Body of Christ wearing jeans, sandals, and a brown t-shirt with a full-frame cat face on it [yes, I have a story about this]. If we appreciate our ministry and what God can do through it, I don't doubt that we all naturally select attire that upholds that value.

Lectors

Lectors proclaim the Word of God to the congregation. You are tasked with the responsibility of relating the written Word to those who are listening. Comprehension is easier when reading than when listening. It is no small challenge to proclaim the Word of God in a way that people hearing it for the first time might comprehend and understand. To that end, you should ask God for help.

Lectors walk a fine line of proclaiming the Word of God in a way that is understandable while not becoming a distraction. They should strive to be engaging and understandable without making themselves the distraction by becoming overly dramatic.

Lector Responsibilities

Please note the responsibilities that the Deacon will have should there be a Deacon serving the mass:

- The Deacon processes in carrying the Book of the Gospels
- The Deacon will proclaim the Universal Prayers

Before Mass

- Check in at least 15 minutes before the beginning of mass.
- Find out if there is a Deacon serving this mass.
- Review the readings and universal prayers. Place the book of readings and the binder of universal prayers on the Ambo.

The Entrance Procession

With a Deacon:

- Process in following the servers; keep 4-5 pews of space
- Make an act of reverence [genuflection, profound bow, simple bow] before entering the Sanctuary
- Enter the Sanctuary and stand to the Ambo side of the altar facing the tabernacle
- When the celebrant genuflects to the tabernacle the lector bows and then goes to their seat

Without a Deacon:

- The Lector will process in carrying the Book of the Gospels
- The Book of the Gospels should be held upright below eye-level
- Process in following the servers keeping 4-5 pews of space
- Enter the sanctuary, without an act of reverence, and walk around the altar such that you're facing the congregation
- Place the Book of the Gospels flat on the altar without embellishments [no elevation, no pause etc.]
- Go and stand on the Ambo side of the altar, facing the tabernacle
- When the celebrant genuflects to the tabernacle the lector bows to the tabernacle and then goes to their seat

Liturgy of the Word

The lector proclaims the readings. A few things to note:

- Please read what is written. Do not add introductions, greetings, or preludes [e.g. "The first reading is a reading from the book of prophet Jeremiah", Good morning, etc.].
- The lector takes their seat in the sanctuary during the responsorial psalm

With a Deacon:

- After the second reading, place the book of readings on the shelf under the ambo
- You may take your seat in the congregation

Without a Deacon:

- After the second reading, place the book of readings on the shelf under the ambo
- Go to your seat in the sanctuary for the Gospel reading, the homily, and the creed
- After the creed, go to the ambo and proclaim the Universal Prayers
- Once the priest has concluded the prayer after the Universal Prayers, return to your seat in the congregation

Altar Servers

Altar Servers minister not only to the Priest and the Deacon during the mass but to the entire congregation. Altar Servers help maintain an ordered and prayerful atmosphere in the Sanctuary during the celebration of the Eucharist. Their ministry helps keep the people's focus on God and His saving work. The Priest can certainly do everything at mass, practically speaking. When the Priest is doing everything, the flow and the prayerful atmosphere becomes tumultuous. Without servers, the presider is shifting from prayers, to setup, to logistics and the focus of the congregation also moves as such. Servers calm the waters and minister to create a continuously prayerful pace and atmosphere during the celebration of the mass.

There are four assigned server positions: Cross Bearer, Candle 1, Candle 2, Acolyte. All servers share the responsibilities before and after mass. During the mass, each position is responsible for different things. In the event there are fewer than four servers, one server will take the responsibility of numerous positions. Please reference the Seating and Floorplan Chart.

All Servers

Before Mass

- Arrive at least 15 minutes early
- Light the Altar and Tabernacle Candles
- Roman Missal:
 - o [Cross Bearer][Ask the priest] Check which ribbon is set to the Collect Prayer in the Roman Missal
 - o [Ask the priest] Take the Roman Missal and place it on the Presider's Credence Table.
 - o [Candle 2] Ask the priest if he wishes to use the book stand for the Roman Missal
- [Ask the priest, deacon, or sacristan] Help move the Ciboria, Chalice, Lavabo, Cups, Tray, Cruets, Finger Towel, Purificators, to the Ambo's Credence Table
- Take the Offertory Gifts to the entrance of the Church
- Be available should the Sacristan, Deacon, or Priest need you
- Wait in the Sacristy until the Priest says it is time to go to the Church Entrance
 - o Candles:
 - Go to the Altar and get a candle from a stand and go to the entrance of the Church
 - o Cross Bearer:
 - Get a processional cross and go to the entrance of the Church

After Mass

- Return the Cross to its stand
- Return the Candles to their stands
- Extinguish the tabernacle candles
- Bring the Roman Missal to the Sacristy
- Bring the Lectionary, Book of the Gospels, and Universal Prayers binder to the Sacristy

Cross Bearer

Entrance Procession

- Lineup in this order:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte
- When the people begin singing, begin walking
- Enter the Sanctuary [without an act of reverence]
- Go to your place [Chart A]
- When the Priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, perform a simple bow, put away the processional cross, and go stand at your seat

Introductory Rites

- Near the end of the Gloria, open the Roman Missal to the ribbon of the Collect Prayer and give the Roman Missal, opened, to Candle 2.

Preparation of the Altar

- After the Universal Prayers, the Priest/Deacon will go to the altar. When he does:
 - o Bring the Roman Missal to the presider and hand it to him
 - o Return to your seat

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- When people start singing the “Holy, Holy, Holy” all servers go to the front of the Sanctuary where they will be kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer
- Cross Bearer and Candle 2 will kneel on the Holy Spirit side
- During the Epiclesis, ring the bells one time
- When the priest elevates the Body of Christ for Adoration, ring the bells 3 times
- When the priest elevates the Blood of Christ for adoration, ring the bells 3 times

- After the great Amen, when the congregation stands, the servers stand and go into the sanctuary where they will stand during the reception of Communion [Chart C]
- Stay in place until after the Eucharistic ministers and priest leave the Sanctuary to distribute Communion
- After the Roman Missal is removed, fold the Bookstand and return it to the Presider's Credence Table
- Return to your seat

Closing Rites

- When the priest says "Let us pray," open the Roman Missal to the ribbon of the Collect Prayer and give the Roman Missal, opened, to Candle 2
- As soon as the closing hymn is announced, get the processional cross and go to your place [Chart A]
- When the priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, perform a simple bow, and then begin processing out of Church.
- The procession out is the same as the entrance:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte

Candle 1

Entrance Procession

- Lineup in this order:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte
- When the people begin singing, the Cross Bearer begins walking.
- Candle 1 & 2 should leave 4 pews of space between them and the Cross Bearer
- The Candles enter the Sanctuary [without an act of reverence]
- Place your candle in the stands, and go to your place [Chart A]
- When the Priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, bow, then go to your seat

Preparation of the Altar

- After the Universal Prayers, the Priest/Deacon will go to the altar.
When he does:
- [Candle 1 & Acolyte]: Bring the following things to the altar in this order:
 - o Chalice
 - Wait to hand the Chalice to the Priest/Deacon that is setting up the altar.
 - o Tray with Pyxes
 - Place the Tray on the altar [Chart B]
 - o Ciboria
 - Place the Ciboria on the altar [Chart B]
 - o Cups
 - Place the cups on the altar [Chart B]
 - o Purificators
 - Place the Purificators on the altar [Chart B]
- When you are finished bringing the items to the altar, go to the Ambo Credence table and collect the water Cruet
- Candle 2 will collect the Wine cruet and will go to the Altar. When they do, stand next to them
- The Priest/Deacon will take the Wine Cruet first, then the Water Cruet
- Go to the Ambo Credence table and collect the Lavabo.

- The Acolyte will have the finger towel. You will have the water cruet and the lavabo.
- Go together to the priest. Candle 1 will pour water over his fingers into the Lavabo, the Acolyte will offer the finger towel, unfolded, to the priest
- Once the towel is returned to the Acolyte, both of you go to the Ambo Credence table, drop off your items, and wait there

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- When people start singing the “Holy, Holy, Holy” all servers go to the front of the Sanctuary where they will be kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Candle 1 and the Acolyte will kneel on the Holy Family side
- After the great Amen, when the congregation stands, the servers stand and go into the sanctuary where they will stand during the reception of Communion [Chart C]
- Stay in place until after the Eucharistic ministers and priest leave the Sanctuary to distribute Communion
- Return to your seat
- After Communion, when the Tabernacle is closed, bring the water cruet to the priest at the altar
- Once the priest pours water into a ciborium and hands you the cruet back, return it to the Ambo Credence Table and then return to the altar
- As the Sacred Vessels are purified, the Priest/Deacon will hand them to you. Return them to the Ambo Credence Table until all Sacred Vessels have been removed.

Closing Rites

- When the closing hymn is announced, go to your place in the Sanctuary [Chart A]
- When the Priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, bow
- After you bow, collect your processional candle from its stand, and process out in the same manner as the entrance procession:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte
- Remember to leave 4 pews of space between you and the Cross Bearer

Candle 2

Entrance Procession

- Lineup in this order:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte
- When the people begin singing, the Cross Bearer begins walking.
- Candle 1 & 2 should leave 4 pews of space between them and the Cross Bearer
- The Candles enter the Sanctuary [without an act of reverence]
- Place your candle in the stand and go to your place [Chart A]
- When the Priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, bow, then go to your seat

Introductory Rites

- Receive the Roman Missal from the Cross Bearer and hold it opened
- When the priest says “Let us Pray” bring the Roman Missal, still opened, to the priest
- When the Priest closes his hands, close the book and return it to the Presider’s Credence Table

Preparation of the Altar

- After the Universal Prayers, the Priest/Deacon will go to the altar. When he does:
- If using the book stand, bring the book stand to the altar and place it on the front-left corner of the Altar
- Stand by the Deacon’s seat
- When the priest goes down to receive the gifts, follow him
- When the priest receives the gifts you will be given the Wine Cruet
- Go to the sanctuary and meet Candle 1 who will have the Water Cruet [Candle 1 & 2]
 - o Offer the priest/deacon the Wine Cruet first, then the Water Cruet.
- Go to the Ambo Credence table and drop off the empty Wine Cruet. Wait there.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- When people start singing the “Holy, Holy, Holy” all servers go to the front of the Sanctuary where they will be kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Cross Bearer and Candle 2 will kneel on the Holy Spirit side
- After the great Amen, when the congregation stands, the servers stand and go into the sanctuary where they will stand during the reception of Communion [Chart C]
- Stay in place until after the Eucharistic ministers and priest leave the Sanctuary to distribute Communion
- Close the Roman Missal and take it back to the Presider’s Credence Table

Closing Rites

- When the priest says “Let us pray,” receive the opened the Roman Missal and take it to the priest
- When the priest closes his hands, close the book and return it to the Presider’s Credence Table
- When the closing hymn is announced, go to your place in the Sanctuary [Chart A]
- When the priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, bow
- After you bow collect your processional candle from its stand and process out in the same manner as the Entrance Procession:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte
- Remember to leave 4 pews of space between you and the Cross Bearer

Acolyte

Entrance Procession

- Lineup in this order:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte
- When the people begin singing, the Cross Bearer begins walking.
- The Acolyte should leave about 4 pews of space between them and the Candles
- Enters the Sanctuary [making an act of reverence] and goes to your place [Chart A]
- When the Priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, bow, then go to your seat

Preparation of the Altar

- Candle 1 and the Acolyte bring the following things to the altar in this order:
 - o Chalice
 - Wait to hand the Chalice to the Priest/Deacon that is setting up the altar.
 - o Tray
 - Place the Tray on the altar [Chart B]
 - o Ciboria
 - Place the Ciboria on the altar [Chart B]
 - o Cups
 - Place the cups on the altar [Chart B]
 - o Purificators
 - Place the Purificators on the altar [Chart B]
- When you are finished bringing items to the altar, go to the Ambo Credence table and collect the Finger Towel
- Candle 1 & Acolyte go together to the priest. Candle 1 will pour water over his fingers into the Lavabo, the Acolyte will offer the towel, unfolded, to the priest.
- Once the towel is returned to you, both of you go to the Ambo Credence table, drop off your items, and wait there.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- When people start singing the “Holy, Holy, Holy” all servers go to the front of the Sanctuary where they will be kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Candle 2 and the Acolyte will kneel on the Holy Family side.
- After the great Amen, when the congregation stands, the servers stand and go into the sanctuary where they will stand during the reception of Communion [Chart C]
- Stay in place until after the Eucharistic ministers and priest leave the Sanctuary to distribute Communion
- Return to your seat

Closing Rites

- When the closing hymn is announced, go to your place in the Sanctuary [Chart A]
- When the priest genuflects to the Tabernacle, bow
- Process out in the same manner as the Entrance Procession:
 - o Cross Bearer
 - o Candle 1 and Candle 2
 - o Acolyte
- Remember to leave 4 pews of space between you and the Candles

EMHC

St. Paul wrote that we are *always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body* [2Cor 4:10]. We not only carry Him about in our bodies but also in our hands. We carry His body to the hundreds of people who desire to carry His life and death within their bodies. Our ministry is more than just handing something out; we are sharing the Body of Christ with His people who need it.

Very importantly, I ask you to consider how you exercise this ministry and how it highlights that you are sharing the Body and Blood of Christ and not simply a piece of bread and glass of wine. Your demeanor, your posture, your attire, your expression, will assist people be aware of the True Presence of Jesus within the Eucharist.

EMHC Responsibilities

- Directions given presume there is distribution of the Precious Blood. Simply ignore these directions if there isn't a distribution of the Precious Blood.

Before Mass

- Arrive 15 minutes before mass
- Place a check by your name on the sign-in sheet for your station
- After checking in, you may go to your pew

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- When the Lamb of God begins to come forward and stand in the center aisle
- Once all EMHC's are present, bow together and enter the Sanctuary
- Ministers of the Body of Christ lineup on the Holy Spirit side
- Ministers of the Blood of Christ lineup on the Holy Family Side
- EMHC's should be in their place in the Sanctuary before the end of the Lamb of God

Communion

- Communion under both species will be distributed to the Precious Blood ministers first
- They will receive the Body of Christ, be handed a purificator, then receive the Precious Blood
- The Priest will distribute the Body of Christ to the other ministers and Servers
- One Precious Blood minister will offer the cup to the Eucharistic ministers while another minister offers the cup to the servers
- The ministers of the Body of Christ will be handed ciboria
- Once all ministers have either a cup or ciboria, all EMHC's go to their assigned locations.
 - o Please wait until all EMHC's have their ciboria or cups before leaving
 - o Do not wait for the priest to collect his Ciborium before going to your assigned location
- Clearly say, "The Body/Blood of Christ" as communicants come forward
- Communicants may receive by hand or by mouth
- Do not fill a pyx. If a communicant comes forward with a pyx, instruct them to speak to the priest in the Sacristy after mass.
- If a Host falls on the floor, pick it up and hold it in the palm of your hand. Give it to the priest after the distribution of Communion
- Should you complete your distribution before others, go and help other Communion lines by standing near the mark by the first pew
 - o Always go to help another line that isn't complete
 - o We don't know how many hosts that minister has remaining; they may need help either for completing Communion to those in line, or they may be running out of hosts.

Running out of Hosts During Communion

- DO NOT presume you can always get more Hosts from the priest or another minister. While that may be true, DO NOT presume it.
- Do your best to distribute Communion to everyone by breaking the hosts in half
- By breaking the Hosts in half, you can double the number of Hosts in your Ciborium. Do not be afraid to break them early just in case.

- Hosts can be broken in half, one handed, by applying pressure from your thumb against your first and middle finger. Align the pre-cut groove in the host with your thumb and fingers and the host will break in line with your fingers.
- In the event you're breaking Hosts and still run out first go to the Priest for more

After Communion

- When you return to the Sanctuary, line up as you did beforehand:
 - o Cup ministers on the Holy Family side
 - o Ciboria ministers on the Holy Spirit side
- Hold your cup/ciborium; do not place them on the altar. The priest/deacon will collect them from you
- At this time, present any hosts that fell on the floor to the priest
- Once the priest/deacon has collected all the cups, the cup ministers return to their pews.
- Once the priest/deacon has collected all the ciboria, the ciboria ministers return to their pews.
- Ministers go to the front of the Sanctuary as a group, bow together, then return to their pews.

After Mass

- Cleanse the Sacred Vessels:
 - o Move the Sacred Vessels [Chalice, Cups, Ciboria], lavabo, cruets, and purificators from the credence table to the sacarium.
 - o Use the white towels to the left to clean the vessels
 - o Use a wet wash cloth and light dish soap to clean the vessels
 - Be gentle
 - Do not submerge the vessels
 - Keep water away from gaps/grooves
 - Rings can scratch the gold surface
- Turn cruets upside down onto the drying holder
- Return the vessels to the counter; after the 4:30pm and 12pm masses, return them to cupboards #4 and #5 instead.
- Please note:

- o Gold is a soft metal and the vessels are gold plated. Repeated, pressed, wiping will move the gold plating. Multi-piece ciboria, cups, and the chalice are hollow. Letting water into the gaps between the pieces will cause rust from the inside out. The cups and chalice are held together by a single bolt that runs from the base of the cup/chalice to the bottom of the bowl. Over tightening the bolt will happen if you dry and rotate the cup/chalice with too tight of a grip. This will damage the cup/chalice.