

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.

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