

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.

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.