

Handbook  
for  
Parish Liturgical Ministers



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## Handbook for Liturgical Ministers

**God of Glory, your beloved Son has shown us that true worship comes from humble and contrite hearts. Bless our brothers and sisters, who have responded to the needs of our parish and wish to commit themselves to your service. Grant that their ministry may be fruitful and our worship pleasing in your sight. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### A Theology of Real Presence

Our Lady of the Gulf is committed to doing all that we can do to make sure that an encounter with the parish is an encounter with Christ, really present, here and now. This Real Presence is most acutely acknowledged as occurring when we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. It is our intention that all who gather know Christ's Real Presence. To that end, Liturgical Ministers should do all they can to make apparent that reality to all who have gathered to celebrate the Eucharist.

*Sacrocsanctum Concilium 7. To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross" [20], but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes [21]. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).*

The Roman Catholic Church takes this promise quite seriously. Something we seldom think about is the Real Presence of Jesus in **us**, the **congregation**. We are more than a crowd or an audience but rather an assembly, a gathering of believers, who have been called by the Lord to worship in His Presence. If we were to be asked when the Mass begins, we would have to say in the parking lot of the church! When the first two Catholics greet one another, the Mass has begun. Our awareness of one another means that we see Jesus in one another and that we are called to show hospitality. We are called to make others feel welcome, especially the stranger, and to be attentive to the needs of others around us. Lay Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors and Altar Servers are, first and foremost, members of the assembly and so share in this important ministry throughout the liturgy. What follows are the more specific perspectives and tasks associated with these ministries.

All who serve in the orderly and faithful celebration of the mass are baptized members of the Body of Christ. It also leads the faithful, by virtue of their baptism, to bring His Real Presence to the liturgy. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal tells us that the most fundamental expression of our lay ministry is the conscious, active and fruitful participation in the mystery of Christ. Being in service to the greatest prayer of the Church is indeed a privilege.

The diversity of roles, functions and ministries enriches the Eucharistic celebrations and assists us in our prayer. In liturgical celebrations, the Liturgical Ministers should not be there as strangers or

silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.

### **Spirituality of Lay Liturgical Ministry**

- **Liturgy Ministry flows from baptism.** This means that Liturgical Ministers should spend time more deeply understanding and living the promises of baptism and the profession of faith.

- **Liturgy Ministry is a response to a call from God.** If you are reading this, you are either sure God has called you to this work or you are discerning *if* God is calling you. In either case, when God calls us to service, God is also calling us to integrate our spiritual lives with our daily lives.

- **Liturgy Ministry calls for a personalized spirituality.**

Before we commit to serving in a liturgical sense, we must first commit to lives of questioning, examining the motivations and desires of our hearts, for the life of a minister of Christ is one of dynamic, living faith. As we begin to function in service to the liturgy, which defines our identity as Catholic Christians, it is essential for us to scrutinize the way we live and worship.

- **Liturgy Ministry is nurtured through prayer.** To serve the people of God we must first be open to the power of the Spirit working in us and among us and be unafraid to listen in the stillness of prayer. For Liturgical Ministers, this means that your personal prayer should link you directly to elements of the Eucharist in general and to your particular area of service. In this way you integrate your spiritual life so that your prayer outside of Mass will strengthen the prayer and service you give within it. Remember, this is integral to developing a spirituality that will create in you the difference between someone doing a job at Mass and someone serving God's people in the celebration of the Eucharist.

### **General Qualifications for all Liturgical Ministers**

- **Liturgical Ministers live according to the law of Christ and at Our Lady of the Gulf this means:**

Liturgical Ministers are normally registered, active members in the parish. Active parishioners are those that contribute time, talent and/or financial support to the work of the parish on a regular basis.

Liturgical Ministers Love the Lord Our God above all else. They live in the world but they do not belong to the World. Do not love the world or things in the world. The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, the pride in riches, comes not from the Father but from the world.

Adult Liturgical Ministers should be fully initiated Catholics in good standing. That means they have received the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation (Youth who serve in the Liturgy should be baptized and receiving regular religious formation.) and participate faithfully in the celebration of the Eucharist. Liturgical Ministers live their lives in such a way that their love for the Mass is evident by their regular active participation in it.

Liturgical Ministers are expected to live chastely in accordance with their state of life. Married Liturgical Ministers should be in a valid Catholic marriage; unmarried ministers should not be cohabitating. All Liturgical Ministers should follow the moral teachings of the Church in all regards especially, in regard to the sanctity of human life.

Liturgical Ministers should have an active prayer life and should regularly avail themselves of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Liturgical Ministers affirm the Apostle's Creed, namely: belief in God, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

Liturgical Ministers must be approved by the pastor and be willing to serve for a **three-year** period, renewable at the discretion of both parties.

Liturgical Ministers are formed and trained for their ministry and are renewed in their ministry annually. At, Our Lady of the Gulf this means:

Liturgical Ministers attend ongoing formation and training as scheduled. Everyone, including current ministers, will be expected to attend ongoing formation and training.

Liturgical Ministers reveal Christ to those they serve. This means: When scheduled to serve as a Liturgical Minister, care should be taken with appearance. As guests at the Lord's Table, we want to come portraying ourselves as prepared and honored to serve. To give this outward sign, we ask that Liturgical Ministers dress in, at least, casual conservative attire: avoid shorts, t-shirts, hairstyles, and accessories that call attention to the minister. Shoes should allow the minister to move quietly and reverently; flip flops are not appropriate when serving.

When scheduled to serve as a Liturgical Minister, care should be taken with preparation, arrival and prayer. This handbook gives the vision for each of these areas. Liturgical Ministers should remember that they are the hands and feet of Christ, both host and guest at the banquet, and their actions should be an example of that. All Liturgical Ministers are ministers of hospitality and of the **Real Presence of Christ** from the moment they arrive. Because each Liturgical Minister is a **sign of Christ's Real Presence** and therefore needs to come having prepared and prayed, it is undesirable to have to ask people to serve at the last minute. This is why if you cannot serve when scheduled, it is *imperative* that you get a substitute well enough in advance so that they might prepare and pray. Of course, in the case of an emergency, Christ's Spirit will imbue a last-minute substitute with His presence and the liturgy will be served. However, we are working toward liturgies that are **saturated with Christ's Real Presence**, and so are trying to move away from anything that is last minute, unprepared and being done without prayer. We want all who come to worship to find us prepared, practiced, and prayed so that it is Christ who welcomes them, nourishes them and sends them forth: Christ working through us.

Liturgical Ministers are supported by the Liturgy Committee and the Pastoral Staff.

If you have an idea of a way that we can further work toward the value of all who celebrate the liturgy, please offer that idea to any member of the Liturgy Committee by contacting them. You will be commissioned upon beginning your ministry and prayed for regularly throughout your term of service. Your ministry will be supported by information about the ways in which you can continue to learn and grow in grace and competence on your own through websites, online courses, webcasts, podcasts, and articles.

You will be part of an annual assessment of liturgical ministry at Our Lady of the Gulf, during which you will be asked to evaluate not just yourself, but the quality of liturgical ministry as you are experiencing it.

If you are having difficulty carrying out your ministry, a member of the Liturgy Committee or the Pastoral Staff will be available to meet with you to help you either overcome the difficulty or discern a different place to serve within the community.

If you would like some assistance in understanding either the theological or the practical elements of your ministry, you can get it from mentors, Liturgy Committee members and the Pastoral Staff, all of whom will be happy to assist you.

**IMPORTANT: Please sign the Acknowledgment on the last page and return your ministry coordinator.**

## **The Ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the Priest and Deacon.**

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may be appointed in parishes in situations of genuine pastoral need where ordinary ministers are not available or are insufficient in number to facilitate the distribution of Holy Communion within Mass when there is a large number of communicants.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion assist priests and deacons in administering Holy Communion. They may not replace them, except on those occasions when the ordinary minister is impeded from administering Holy Communion because of ill health, advanced age, or other pressing pastoral obligations.

It is the responsibility of pastors to evaluate the need for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and to identify worthy candidates for this service. The number of extraordinary ministers in a parish should correspond to genuine pastoral need. The number should not be so few as to unduly burden any one minister, **yet not so large as to make it appear that this ministry is a regular and normal expression of lay participation in the Eucharist.**

## **A Position Description for the Lay Liturgical Ministry of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion**

### **Basic Requirements**

A proper understanding of Christ's Real Presence in consecrated bread and wine. A proper understanding includes that you:

Have received recent education in the Church's teaching about this Mystery;

Have the ability to articulate the Church's teaching about Real Presence;

Have an understanding of the liturgical postures and gestures that convey reverence for the Real Presence of Christ in consecrated bread and wine;

Have the following spiritual dispositions and/or the willingness to work to develop them:

**Humility:** while it is a great honor to be chosen to serve in this ministry, the honor is received with the humility of Christ, who did not deem equality with God something to be presumed, but rather chose to empty Himself and serve others, as a slave.

**Radical hospitality:** All who come to liturgy are God's privileged guests. It is the responsibility of those who serve at the banquet to offer to all this magnificent hospitality.

**Gratitude:** Eucharist means thanksgiving, and those who serve at the Eucharist are called to possess deeply grateful spirits, lifestyles and language while gathered with the Body of Christ and while living their daily lives.

**Reverence:** Ministers of Holy Communion are the teachers of reverence. As such, the same reverence given to the Body and Blood of Christ is offered also to the assembly, the lectors

and the presider as they too meditate Christ, really present.

Time to engage in adequate remote and proximate preparation to serve. Adequate remote and proximate preparation includes the following:

For remote preparation (that is during the week prior to serving and at other times), a Minister of Holy Communion will have at least one hour during the week to pray for the people of OLG, for the needs of the community and for the openness of your spirit that Christ may flow through you; Participate in all gathered and self-directed formation for Lay Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion or for Liturgical Ministers as a group.

For proximate preparation, which is the preparation immediately preceding service to the liturgy, a Liturgical Minister will have at least 1.5 hours to give to the celebration of the Eucharist. Prepare to celebrate the Mass by reading the scriptures and by praying for the ministry. Be part of a fully, conscious and active assembly.

### **Special Requirements**

OLG has many Masses each weekend. Lay Ministers are asked to be willing to be scheduled at more than one Mass time. This will not happen on the same weekend. Lay Ministers for the highest holy days of the Triduum, Easter Sunday, and Christmas and those who serve on Holy Days of obligation are gathered by first come, first served sign-ups. The same preparation is required; however, Eucharistic Ministers serving during the Triduum, Easter and Christmas will need to allot two to two and a half hours to serve and may be asked to attend a special training for the liturgies for which they have agreed to serve.

### **Procedures for the Distribution of Holy Communion at Mass by Extraordinary Ministers**

Extraordinary ministers normally sit in the assembly until the time when they approach the altar to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion.

At the *Lamb of God*, the priest alone, with the assistance of the deacon, breaks the Sacred Hosts. Empty ciboria or patens, if necessary, are then brought to the altar by servers. The priest or deacon places the Hosts in empty ciboria or patens if necessary for distribution. The Precious Blood should be already for distribution since it was prepared and poured into the chalice(s) at the time of the preparation of the gifts. Extraordinary ministers do not participate in these actions since they are the proper role of the priest and deacon.

Extraordinary ministers approach the altar as the priest receives Communion. After the priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers, assisted by the deacon, and then hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people. Extraordinary ministers should not take the sacred vessels from the altar but should be handed them by the priest or deacon.

Extraordinary ministers should receive Holy Communion from the priest or deacon before being handed the sacred vessels for distributing Holy Communion to the people.

After receiving their sacred vessels, extraordinary ministers reverently and without haste go to

their Communion stations.

When distributing the Sacred Hosts, the extraordinary minister holds up the consecrated Host as each communicant approaches and, addressing the communicant, says, "The Body of Christ." When the communicant responds "Amen," the minister places the Host on the communicant's tongue or in the communicant's hand.

When distributing the Precious Blood, the extraordinary minister holds up the chalice filled with the Precious Blood as each communicant approaches and, addressing the communicant, says "The Blood of Christ." When the communicant responds "Amen," the minister hands the chalice to the communicant. After each communicant has drunk from the chalice, the extraordinary minister wipes both sides of the rim of the chalice with a purificator. The minister then turns the chalice slightly after each communicant has received the Precious Blood. Only purificators made of cloth may be used; paper or disposable purificators may not be used.

The communicant, including the extraordinary minister, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction, that is, dipping the Host into the chalice.

Holy Communion should always be distributed with the utmost dignity and reverence. The minister should avoid all haste in distributing Holy Communion. If a Host is dropped, the minister should reverently pick it up and set it aside or consume it. The minister should also reverently pick up any particles that drop from the Host. If any of the Precious Blood should spill, the minister should use the purificator to wipe up the spill. The area where the spill occurred should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium. After use, purificators should always be rinsed in a sacrarium before being laundered.

After Communion the Precious Blood that remains is to be consumed and the Sacred Hosts that remain are to be either consumed or returned to the tabernacle by the priest or deacon.

Care should be taken that any fragments of the Hosts remaining on the corporal or in the sacred vessels after Communion be reverently consumed. The reverence due to the Precious Blood of the Lord demands that it be fully consumed immediately after Communion is completed and never poured on the ground or into the sacrarium. Extraordinary Ministers may assist the priest and deacon in consuming any Precious Blood that remains after Communion. This should be done with the greatest decorum either at the altar or at the place where the purifications will take place.

After the Precious Blood has been consumed and the Hosts either consumed or taken to the tabernacle for reservation, the sacred vessels should be purified. The purifications may take place either at the altar, at a side table in the sanctuary, or at a place convenient to the sacrarium immediately after distribution of communion or the conclusion of the Mass.

The Extraordinary Ministers return the vessels to the altar and place them on the corporal for purification (or in the case of the Hosts for reservation, in the tabernacle by the priest or deacon). The ministers should then return to their place in the congregation.

After Mass, the vessels may be moved to the sacristy to be washed and dried thoroughly so the

vessels are ready for the next liturgy. Please note: Extraordinary Ministers may assist with the task of cleaning (ie washing and drying) the sacred vessels but not in their purification.

### **Formation and Training Requirements for the Liturgical Ministry of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion**

**Eucharistic Minister Training/Formation** is held annually. The dates for training will be posted on the OLG website.

As an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, you will be asked, on occasion to exercise your ministry outside of Mass by bringing the sacrament to someone who is unable to attend Mass.

### **Distribution of Holy Communion to the Home Bound**

Extraordinary ministers who take Holy Communion to the home bound should be trained for the special requirements of this ministry.

Make an appointment before the visit and pray for those that are to be visited.

The Eucharist that is taken to the home bound is to be carried in a pyx, which should be placed in a burse and carried on the minister's person with utmost reverence. Extraordinary ministers while bearing the Eucharist should as a rule keep silence, pray, and be especially mindful of the sacred responsibility that has been entrusted to them.

Before Mass place your Pyx on the altar with some indication as to the number of Hosts necessary.

At the appropriate time the Priest or Deacon will call those taking communion to the home bound to come forward. He will give you a blessing and send you out. Leave immediately for your visit. **DO NOT WAIT FOR THE FINAL BLESSING.**

If you are picking up communion without attending Mass pick up the tabernacle key and reverently remove the needed number of Sacred Hosts from the Tabernacle and place them in the Pyx.

Where possible follow the guidelines for Private Communion that follows.

Errands such as shopping are not to be done by the extraordinary ministers while bearing the Blessed Sacrament. Nor is the Eucharist ever to be reserved in the minister's house for distribution at a later date. The Eucharist must be borne directly from Church to the home bound without interruption. Please consume any Sacred Host remaining after distribution.

A pyx should always be blessed before being used for the first time. After each use, it should be purified and then washed and dried.

Priests should be available at times for the administration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to those who are seriously ill. Extraordinary Ministers should advise the priest of the wish of the sick to receive Penance and raise with him the question of the Anointing.

A Rite for Home Communion Visits

GREETING

**In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit  
The Lord be with you.** And also with you.

PENITENTIAL RITE

**Brothers (and Sisters), to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind  
our sins:**

<b>Lord Jesus, you are the healer of the sick.</b>	Lord have mercy.
<b>Christ Jesus, you are the Bread of life.</b>	Christ have mercy.
<b>Lord Jesus, you are the hope of sinners.</b>	Lord have mercy

**May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting  
life.** Amen.

**LITURGY OF THE WORD** *You can substitute the Gospel of the day if you have a missal.*

**We hear in the Gospel of John Jesus saying:  
I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live  
forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:51)**

COMMUNION RITE

**Now let us pray as Jesus Himself taught us.** Our Father...

*Remove the Host from the Pyx and hold up the Host.*

**Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed  
are those called to the supper of the Lamb.**

*The communicants say once:*

Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my  
soul shall be healed.

**The Body of Christ** Amen. *You may break the host in smaller pieces if needed.*

SILENT PRAYER

**Let us pray: Almighty and ever-living God, may the Body and Blood of Christ you  
Son be for (Name) our brother/sister a lasting remedy for body and soul. Through  
Christ our Lord.**

Amen

**May Almighty God bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to eternal life**

Amen

## **Guidelines for Lectors**

In current practice, most instituted lectors are seminarians and candidates for the permanent diaconate. However, recognizing the importance of the proclamation of the Word of God in the liturgy and the genuine need for persons to perform this liturgical action, the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM)* provides for others to serve in the role of lector as well:

*In the absence of an instituted lector, other lay people may be deputed to proclaim the readings from sacred scripture, people who are truly suited to carrying out this function and carefully prepared, so that by their hearing the readings from the sacred texts the faithful may conceive in their hearts a sweet and living affection for sacred scripture (GIRM, 101).*

Thus, when instituted lectors are not present, it is appropriate for other lay men and women to proclaim the readings at Mass. The guidelines that follow refer to those persons who serve as non-instituted lectors.

## **Becoming a Lector**

### **Qualifications to serve as a Lector**

As noted above, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states that lectors should be “truly suited to carrying out this function,” and that they should be “carefully prepared” (*GIRM*, 101). In order for an individual to be regarded as “truly suited” for this role, a lector should meet the General Qualifications for all Liturgical Ministers as well as:

-Possessed of the necessary ability and talents to proclaim the Word of God in a clear, dignified, and effective manner.

### **Preparation**

Our Lady of the Gulf requires that a person participate in a program of formation before being a lector. Topics covered include:

- Sacred Scripture as the Word of God
- Introduction to the *Lectionary*: Contents and Structure
- Techniques for Effective Proclamation of the Word of God
- Pastoral and Liturgical Considerations Related to the Role of Lector
- Microphone operation

### **Continuing formation**

Lectors should strive to develop their abilities as proclaimers of God's Word beyond this initial training. Preparation, prayer, study, and practice are key to one's development as an effective minister of God's Word, and these practices should be fostered by the parish. Initially, a parish will provide opportunities for a new lector to practice reading from the ambo and to become familiar with the acoustics and amplification. Workbooks that provide scriptural commentary and aids to pronunciation may be given to lectors during their term of service. An introduction to different techniques for praying with scripture (*e.g., lectio divina, Ignatian method, scriptural rosary*) can

also serve as a helpful means of integrating one's personal devotion to God's Word with one's service as a lector.

### Children as Lectors

While lectors will ordinarily be adults, this does not exclude the possibility of children and younger adolescents from serving as lectors, particularly in masses for children, school masses, or family masses. In these instances, those who will serve as lectors should be chosen primarily according to their competence at proclaiming the Word of God, and not solely for the sake of providing an additional means of liturgical participation. They should be carefully taught the meaning of sacred scripture as the Word of God, and receive training for their service.

### Style of Proclamation

The *Introduction to the Lectionary* states, "a speaking style on the part of the reader that is audible, clear, and intelligent is the first means of transmitting the Word of God properly to the assembly" An "audible, clear, and intelligent" proclamation of God's Word requires an appropriate use of inflection, pause, projection, phrasing, articulation, posture, and pace. It should never, however, be theatrical.

In applying these techniques of proclamation, the lector should consider that his/her primary task is to present the Word of God in all of its richness and meaning. Hence, the lector should never proclaim God's Word in a dull or robotic manner, but should always work to accurately reflect the genre, tone, and style of the particular scriptural passage in one's own manner of proclamation. As well, a style of reading or the use of physical gestures that would turn the proclamation of scripture into a dramatic act directing the attention of the assembly from the Word of God to the reader should be strictly avoided.

Throughout their time of service, lectors should strive to develop the most effective manner of proclaiming God's Word, and pastors should regularly give feedback to lectors concerning their style of proclamation.

### **Proclamation of the Readings**

The readings at Mass should be proclaimed from the ambo. When the lector is already in the sanctuary, he or she bows to the altar and proceeds directly to the ambo.

Readings should always be introduced with the text provided in the *Lectionary*, "A reading from...". As well, readings should be concluded with the phrase, "The Word of the Lord". Readings must be read integrally and without any additions, omissions, or changes to the text as given in the *Lectionary*.

In order to foster meditation on God's Word, the readings may be followed by a brief period of silence.

### The Psalm

It is preferable that the responsorial psalm be sung. However, if there is no psalmist, the lector may proclaim the responsorial psalm after the first reading. In this case, the lector should follow

the first reading with a short pause. The response to the psalm should then be recited, without any introductory words (*e.g.*, "The response is..."). The psalm itself should be recited in a manner that is conducive to meditation on the Word of God.

#### The Universal Prayer

When no deacon is present, a lector may announce the intentions of the universal prayer from the ambo. When announcing the intentions, the lector should consider that these texts are the prayers of the entire gathered community. Hence, a lector should not add his/her own personal intentions into the universal prayer.

## Altar Servers

### *INTRODUCTION*

The primary role of the altar server is to assist the priest during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Altar servers carry the cross, the processional candles (some Masses), hold the book for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar, assist the priest at the preparation of the altar during the offertory, wash the hands of the priest, and assist the priest celebrant and deacon in other functions.

Altar servers are chosen from among the faithful who display a desire to participate in an intimate way during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is an extreme privilege to kneel so close to the altar as our loving Savior, Jesus Christ, becomes truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity upon the altar.

### *REQUIREMENTS*

An altar server must be willing and interested to participate in this ministry on their own accord.

An altar server performs all assigned duties with **attention, care and devotion** because they are serving in the presence of Our Lord. The Sanctuary is holy, and access to it is restricted to a very few people. Do not abuse the privilege you have been given to enter the sanctuary by being disrespectful or irreverent. Remember we are in God's house.

### *UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF SERVING AT THE ALTAR*

- By serving at Mass, the altar server is given the ability to serve God in the liturgy.
- By the altar server's example of reverence, loyalty, and dedication, the altar servers help his parish worship God.
- By serving, the altar server is answering God's call to serve.
- By serving, the altar server grows in his/her own faith and devotion.
- An altar server is a prayer leader, to the extent that his/her actions during the Mass assist the people in knowing what to do.
- An altar server assists the priest preparing for Mass and at the altar.
- An altar server is responsible for taking care of any problems that may occur during Mass.
- An altar server is not a distraction to the faithful's listening/prayer to God.

### *GENERAL RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*

- The priest depends on you.
- You need to be prompt. Arrive 20-30 minutes before Mass to vest, help the sacristan set up, and to prepare oneself for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
- Servers should also remain after Mass to help clean up and say a Prayer of Thanksgiving to God for the grace of being able to serve at Mass.
- Servers should not handle any consecrated hosts or the Precious Blood unless specifically directed by the priest or deacon in rare, emergency situations.

- Servers must remain in the sanctuary during the entire Mass and are not to leave the sanctuary unless they need to enter the sacristy to retrieve something, they are ill or they are directed to do so by the priest or deacon.
- Every altar server must attend every Mass they are scheduled for. When a server cannot be present, that server must arrange a replacement.
- You help the priest make sure that things go smoothly.
- The parishioners depend on you too.
- A good server keeps things going smoothly, never sloppy.
- Stay calm when things go wrong.
- Be responsible and calm
- Be reverent in Church.

### *DRESS AND APPEARANCE*

#### **LITURGICAL DRESS:**

Servers will vest in a white alb. Albs should be clean and pressed. Dirty albs must be set aside and brought to the attention of the sacristan. The length of the alb should be at the ankle and should not be shorter than four inches above the ankle. Likewise, albs should not drag on the floor. Nothing you wear should draw attention to you and detract from the Mass.

### *PROPER POSTURE*

**Standing-** Stand tall with both feet flat on the floor. Never lock your knees, but don't slouch. Face the person who is speaking. The hands should be held together on the breast, palm to palm, with the fingers extended and close together pointing upwards, the thumbs being crossed right over left.

**Kneeling-** Kneel upright, not slouching or sitting on your heels. The hands should be held as in the standing position or folded on placed on the kneeler. The head may be bowed down or facing the person who is speaking.

**Sitting-** Sit up straight and do not slouch. Both feet should be flat on the floor. The hands should be placed palms down on the knees. Face the person who is speaking. Never create a reason to take notice of you.

**Walking/Turning-** All movements in the sanctuary should be noiseless and graceful. Never run or skip in the Church. Never walk backwards for more than two steps. When two or more servers are together, they should move as one body (shoulder to shoulder).

**Genuflecting-** A genuflection is made by dropping the right knee to touch the ground near the left heel. One genuflects only to the Tabernacle (or to the Crucifix on Good Friday) whenever one passes in front of it. One may or may not make the Sign of the Cross. Genuflecting is properly made when one stops walking and then genuflects. In other words, you cannot walk and genuflect at the same time.

**Bowing-** A simple bow is made by bowing the head. A simple bow is made to the priest after presenting the cruets to him and after washing his hands. A simple bow is also made when one

arrives at the altar but is carrying something. A profound bow is made by bowing the head and shoulders. A profound bow is made to the altar and during the Creed at the sentence: By the power of the Holy Spirit....

### *PROCESSIONS*

A procession is a public expression of demonstration by the clergy and laity of their Christian belief. Processions may serve a purely practical purpose or a symbolic purpose. In the celebration of the mass a number of processions may take place involving clergy and laity. The clergy and ministers may enter in procession, the gifts of bread and wine may be brought forth in procession, the laity come in procession for communion, and the clergy and ministers may leave in procession.

In procession, one walks uprightly, with hands folded palm to palm, with thumbs being crossed right over left. There should be a space of two (2) pews between you and the person in front of and behind you. The cross bearer (or thurifer in solemn Masses) set the pace of the procession at a slow but steady pace.

#### *Entrance Procession*

- The Cross bearer leads the procession, followed by the candles and or Altar Servers and the Priest.
- Upon reaching the altar, the cross bearer and servers will stop for a moment, bow their heads and move to the right and left.
- When the Priest kisses the altar all the servers will go to their seats.

#### *Opening Prayer*

*(Most of this is for weekend Mass)*

- At the end of the Gloria, when you hear, “You alone are the Most High Jesus Christ,” an Altar Server picks up the small Roman Missal and brings it to the priest celebrant.
- After the congregation says, “Amen,” the server returns the Roman Missal to the table. Then, all Sit for the Readings.

#### *Offertory (after the homily has ended)*

- Once the congregation has sat down after the Nicen Creed an Altar Server immediately places the large Roman Missal with book stand on altar.
- When the priest stands, the servers will go to the bottom step with him and stand on the left and right.
- The priest will give the collection to a server. He then places it on the floor in front of the Altar. Then he sits down.
- A server will receive the ciborium of bread from the priest. He brings it to the altar and places it with the rest of the ciboria of bread. Then he returns to the credence table and picks up the cruet of water without it’s cap on and stands with the other server who is holding the cruet of wine. The cruet is held in the right hand, with the left hand placed over the chest.
- The server who is holding the cruet of wine then he stands with the server who is holding the cruet of water. The cruet is held in the right hand, with the left hand placed over the chest.
- Servers will present the wine and water to the priest or deacon. After, they will return to the credence table.

- A server will retain the cruet of water in his right hand.
- The second server will put down the now-empty cruet of wine and pick up and unfold the finger towel and retrieve the bowl from the credence table.
- Once they have washed the priest's hands, they will return to their places.

*Eucharistic Prayer*

- When Father places his hands over the gifts to call down the Holy Spirit, a server will ring the bells once.
- When the Consecrated host is elevated the, the bells ring three times.
- Repeat for the Precious Blood.
- During the entire Eucharistic Prayer, there should be a total of 7 rings.

*Communion*

- All the servers will receive communion.
- A server should immediately remove the Roman Missal while communion of the faithful is taking place.
- Then they will return to their places and pray in silence.

*Dismissal*

- When the final blessing is given, a server retrieves the cross.
- They will proceed to the front side of the altar, leaving enough room for the priest to be in the center.
- When the priest genuflects, the others make a head bow.
- The cross bearer leads the procession out as usual.

## Ushers / Greeters

### Introduction

OLG has prepared the following Guidelines for Ushers. They apply to those ministering during Sunday Mass, as well as other liturgical celebrations. The purpose of these notes is to provide some general principals on these very important liturgical ministries.

Ushers are called to be Ministers of Hospitality. They are entrusted with promoting a sense of welcoming and belonging to all the faithful assembled for worship. They are the first point of contact for the communal celebration of the Liturgy and because of this, should take special steps in being living representatives of the Parish.

### Requirements

Ushers are truly a service to the Church and should be treated seriously and with great dignity. Therefore, they should understand the Liturgy in order to be effective.

In addition, the following attributes will assist the ministers: patience, reverence, sensitivity, compassion, understanding and gentleness.

Your participation as an usher should be a direct reflection of your own prayer life which is nurtured by the Word of God and reception of Holy Eucharist thereby imbuing within you a spirit of dignity and respect.

### Usher Guidelines

#### Preparation:

- The current schedule is distributed monthly by email and is also posted in the sacristy.
- Find a substitute if you will not be able to attend your assigned Mass
- Arrive 20-30 minutes before Mass
- Dress appropriately
- Be aware of where the hearing assist system is and how to use it.

#### Before Mass begins:

- Position at least one usher at each door
- Welcome the parishioners as they enter the Church
- If you do not have enough ushers, find an usher from the congregation to assist
- Ensure the gifts are on the table in the back of the Nave. If they are not there 10 minutes before the beginning of Mass go to the sacristy and get them
- Select a family to bring up the gifts.
- Assist parishioners in finding seats, accompanying them to the seating row if necessary. Seat parishioners **before** readings and during **pauses** after first reading and after responsorial psalm; **DO NOT** seat parishioners during readings or homily.

#### During Mass:

- Seat late parishioners using the side aisles (try not to have people standing in the back of the church)
- After Mass starts all ushers should be at their assigned positions (we don't want to be a distraction for the priests or congregation)
- Keep doorways and aisles clear of any obstructions (wheelchairs, walkers, strollers)
- Monitor the congregation for any unusual activity (illness, suspicious person etc.)

#### Offertory:

- Be aware of altar servers and gift family processing down the aisle.
- What to do if family doesn't go to the back for the gifts (usher should quickly select someone in the back pews)
- If the family doesn't bring either the wine or the hosts (usher should quickly retrieve the wine or hosts and bring forward to the priest)

#### Collection:

- All ushers should move at the same time from the back of the church to start the collection
- Actively monitor and assist as the baskets are being passed.
- All collection money should be placed in a security bag and stored in safe keeping.

#### Recession:

- Once the final blessing is complete an usher should be available to hand out bulletins at each exit; main doors, side doors
- Two ushers should go through the pews to ensure no personal belongings have been left behind, return kneelers to the upright position, clean up any trash etc. (Latex gloves are available for your use)

#### Medical Situations

Assess the situation and determine if professional medical help is needed. If help is needed:

- Call 911 and identify the location.
- One usher should stay with the ill person
- Try to get as much information about the person and their condition as possible.
- Another usher should wait outside for the emergency responders
- Know where the following items are located for medical emergencies
  - First Aid Kit
  - Wheel chair
  - Bottled water and juice
  - Latex gloves
  - Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED). The AED should only be used by someone trained in its use.



## Liturgical Minister Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received the OLG Handbook for Liturgical Ministers. I have read the Handbook and I understand and will adhere to the guidelines it contains.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Priest's Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_