

Liturgical Ministry Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Liturgical Ministry Guidelines
For the Archdiocese of Milwaukee
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Liturgical Ministry Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee
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THE MINISTRY OF ALTAR SERVER

GUIDELINES

THE ROLE OF THE ALTAR SERVER AT MASS (WITHOUT A DEACON)

“In the absence of an instituted acolyte, lay ministers may be deputed to serve at the altar and assist the priest and deacon; they may carry the cross, the candles, the thurible, the bread, the wine, and the water...” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal #100*).

BEFORE MASS

Altar Servers should be present and vested at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. They need to make sure that:

- The candles are lit.
- The bread (including a large host) and wine are on the gift table.
- The chalices, the plates, the corporal, the purificators, the cruet with water, the lavabo bowl and towel are on the credence table.
- The Sacramentary is properly set and in place.
- Hymnals and /or Orders of Worship are available.
- The tabernacle key is in place.
- The censer is prepared (and additional coals prepared as needed) if incense is to be used.
- The aspergil and water vessel are prepared if the sprinkling rite will be used.

Note that these functions may also be carried out by a sacristan.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

During the entrance procession the Altar Servers may carry the cross, the candles, the censer and incense. If incense is used, the Server with the censer and incense (also known as the thurifer) leads the entrance procession. The thurifer is followed by the crossbearer who may be flanked by two servers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the cross and candles are taken to their places. Ministers who are not carrying anything make a profound bow to the altar or, if the tabernacle is in the sanctuary, a genuflection. (GIRM #120, 122, 188)

If the priest chooses to incense the altar and the cross, the Server assists the priest in preparing the censer after the priest kisses the altar. (GIRM #123)

The Servers go to their designated places. (GIRM #188)

As soon as the priest takes his place at his chair, one Server is ready to approach him with the Sacramentary. The Server holds the book while standing slightly to the side of the priest. (GIRM #189)

If the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Water is to be used, the Server stands ready to assist the priest as needed.

If incense will be used again in the liturgy, the Server is responsible for keeping the coals in the censer burning.

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THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Servers listen attentively to the proclamation of God's word and join in the singing of the responsorial psalm.

If incense is used at the Gospel, the Server with the censer and incense brings them to the priest as soon as the Gospel Acclamation begins. The priest puts incense in the censer. If the *Book of the Gospels* is on the altar, the priest goes in procession with the *Book* from the altar to the ambo. The thurifer may precede him to the ambo and stand to the side. After the priest says *A reading from the holy Gospel...* and signs himself, the Server gives the censer to the priest who incenses the *Book of the Gospels*. (See GIRM #133, 134)

Lighted candles carried by two Servers may also be part of the procession of the *Book of the Gospels* to the ambo. In this case, the Servers with the candles follow the thurifer. They stand on either side of the ambo, facing it. (See GIRM #133)

After the Gospel, the Servers return the censer and candles to their place.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Gifts

The Servers place the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, and the Sacramentary on the altar. (GIRM #139, 190). If necessary, they assist the priest in receiving the gifts of the people. They may bring the bread and wine to the altar and hand them to the priest. (GIRM #140, 190)

If incense is used, a Server brings the censer and incense to the priest. After the priest incenses the gifts, the cross, and the altar, the Server incenses the priest and the people. The censer is swung back and forth three times for the incensation of the priest and the people. Before and after an incensation, a profound bow is made to the person or object that is incensed, except for the incensation of the altar and the Mass offerings. (GIRM #144, 190, 277, *Ceremonial of Bishops* #92)

Servers bring water, bowl and towel to priest that he may wash his hands. (GIRM #145)

The Servers are attentive to the Eucharistic Prayer through their posture and by joining in the singing of the Eucharistic acclamations.

Communion

During the *Lamb of God* the Servers bring the extra plates and purificators to the altar. (See *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America* #37). The Servers receive Holy Communion after the priest has received. (Norms #39)

Servers may not distribute Holy Communion unless they have been mandated for this function by the bishop, nor should they carry or move the sacred species. (See GIRM #162)

After Communion, the Servers remove all purified vessels (GIRM #163), purificators, the corporal and

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the Sacramentary from the altar.

If vessels are purified at the altar, a Server brings water to the priest. (See GIRM #163)

A Server holds the Sacramentary at the priest's chair for the Prayer after Communion. (GIRM #189)

The Concluding Rites

If a more solemn blessing or the prayer over the people are used, a server continues to hold the Sacramentary at the priest's chair. (GIRM #189)

After the dismissal, the Servers (with censer, cross and candles if used) gather in the usual place before the altar. If they are not carrying anything, they make a profound bow to the altar with the priest, or, if the tabernacle is in the sanctuary, they make a genuflection. (GIRM #169)

All depart in the order in which they entered.

Note: If there are only two servers, they divide the more important functions described above between themselves.

AFTER MASS

After Mass, the Servers extinguish the candles, properly dispose of the lighted coals, assist with other clean-up as needed, and carefully hang up their vestments.

ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS FOR ALTAR SERVERS

The ministry of Altar Server “by its very nature supports or assists other ministries...Assisting another person is an ennobling act.” (G. Thomas Ryan)

Excellent servers know the flow and movement of the liturgy well enough to anticipate the needs of the priest or other ministers. They do not need to be invited to perform their normal duties.

Attentive Servers therefore are always alert to unanticipated events during Mass (e.g., a forgotten Sacramentary, a blown-out candle, a dropped cruet). Well-trained and experienced Servers learn to deal with such incidents calmly and quietly.

Altar Servers move in a deliberate and graceful manner. Rushed movements and gestures take attention away from the central action of the priest or other ministers. Servers carry, present and use liturgical objects such as the Sacramentary, processional cross or censer with dignity; this usually means carrying and holding items with two hands.

In order to participate more fully in the Mass and to model appropriate prayer for others in the assembly, it is desirable that Servers know Mass prayers such as the Confiteor, the Gloria, the Profession of Faith, the *Orate, fratres*, the Lord's Prayer and the “Lord, I am not worthy” by heart. Servers should also be able to gracefully make the various gestures used at Mass (e.g., the Sign of the Cross, the triple signing before the Gospel, and a profound bow).

Attention to personal grooming is also a hallmark of an excellent Server. Hair should be dry, clean and neatly combed. Ideally, dress shoes should be worn. Hands and fingernails should be clean and neatly manicured.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS

GUIDELINES

*When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.*

Happy are those who are called to this supper.

RECENT HISTORY

In 1963, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council authorized the extension of the faculty for Holy Communion under both kinds in the Decree on the Liturgy (#55). In 1973, diocesan bishops in the United States were authorized to commission Catholic laymen and women to distribute Communion during Mass and to take Communion to the sick or dying. In 1984 the Vatican approved an earlier resolution of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops that permitted Communion from the cup at every Sunday and holy day Mass. “Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds. For in this form the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is more clearly evident” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, GIRM 281). The return to the ancient practice of the Assembly receiving communion from the cup, as well as the increasing shortage of ordained ministers, resulted in the need for additional communion distributors. Bishops, priests and deacons, by virtue of their ordination, are the ordinary ministers of communion. Lay men and women who are trained and commissioned to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass are called “Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.”

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Archbishop Dolan has determined that all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be fully initiated members of the Church; that is, they must have received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and holy communion.

Attire: Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should dress in a way that expresses the dignity and importance of what they are called to do. Our attire reveals our understanding and respect for Christ present in the Eucharist and in the assembly. Nothing a minister does or wears should detract [draw attention away from] from the community’s prayer.

Extraordinary ministers of communion should arrive at least 10 –15 minutes before Mass begins in order to learn their assigned station and to determine if any adjustments are needed in the usual format for distribution. Early arrival both allows the minister some time for personal reflection before Mass and it enables the person in charge of ministers at the liturgy to find additional ministers if more are needed.

MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST DURING MASS

In 2002 the bishops of the United States put into effect the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*. This document, in combination with the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, provides both the vision and the specific details needed for the proper and reverent distribution of communion.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS

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When Extraordinary Ministers of Communion are needed, they approach the altar as the priest receives Communion. After the priest has received the Eucharist, he distributes communion to the Extraordinary Ministers, assisted by the deacon, if present (*Norms 38*). Neither deacons nor lay ministers may receive Holy Communion in the manner of a concelebrating priest. (*Norms 39*) That is, they may not take the host or the chalice themselves or pass the vessels containing the Body or the Blood from one person to the other; nor may they receive Communion at the same time the priest does. After all the Extraordinary Ministers have received the Eucharist, the priest celebrant hands the vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the Extraordinary Ministers. The deacon may assist the priest in this process. (*Norms 40*).

When a large number of Extraordinary Ministers is needed, the priest may distribute the Body and Blood to one or two of the ministers who would then assist him in communicating the rest of the Extraordinary Ministers. After all of these ministers have received Communion, the priest celebrant returns to the altar. The ministers without vessels may then approach the priest who hands each their proper vessel.

The practice of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion waiting to receive communion until after the distribution of communion to the Assembly is not in accord with liturgical law. (*Norms 39*).

The proper formula for distributing communion is simply “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ.” No words should be added or deleted from these texts. Expanding the formula to “*This is the Body/Blood of Christ,*” for example, narrows the focus of the text to Christ’s presence in the consecrated elements, thus diminishing the symbolic presence of Christ in the minister, the recipient and the rest of the assembly. Nor is it recommended that the communicant be addressed by name (although an exception might be made if the minister knows everyone in a small Assembly by name). Otherwise, if some communicants are addressed by name and others are not, it can be a sign of disunity at the very time we are most supposed to be in most union with each other. The brevity and repetition of this formula in a large Assembly requires a certain level of skill and spiritual discipline of all eucharistic ministers.

The host or the chalice should be held before the communicant at a level that makes eye contact between the communicant and the minister possible and natural. Directly addressing the communicant and making eye contact add a significant dimension to the reception of communion. It is always the choice of the communicant whether to receive the Body of Christ in the hand or on the tongue.

Because it takes longer to receive communion from the cup, experience has found that having two ministers of the cup for every minister of the bread allows the communion procession to flow more smoothly. After a communicant has received the Blood of Christ, the cup minister carefully wipes both sides of the rim of the chalice with a purificator and turns the chalice slightly. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene. (*Norms 45*)

If consecrated wine is left after the distribution of communion, extraordinary ministers may consume what remains from their cup of distribution. (*Norms 52*) This may be done at their place of distribution or at the altar. The consecrated wine should be consumed in a reverent manner; it should not be consumed while in motion. The Precious Blood is never to be poured into the ground or the sacrarium. (*Norms 55*)

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS

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The empty vessels used for distribution may be taken to a side table. Extraordinary ministers may not assist with the purification of these vessels. The consecrated elements are not to be left on a table until after Mass.

The architecture and layout of each worship space will affect the patterns of individual parishes. Ongoing training with careful attention to all the details involved in this ministry is needed. The bishops remind us, however, that “Liturgical formation ‘must above all be spiritual....’ Good liturgy is the product not so much of a well-known rubric as much as a well-trained heart” (*Introduction to the Order of Mass*).

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All communion ministers should be attentive to the presence of persons in the Assembly who have special needs. Those who are hearing impaired or visually impaired may require ministers to adapt accordingly. Other physically handicapped persons may not be able to come forward for communion, so ministers may need to go to them. Certain members of the Assembly may suffer from Celiac-Sprue disease, an illness in which a person’s digestive system is compromised by the consumption of gluten, one of the major ingredients in wheat flour. Persons with this disease may choose to receive only from the cup or they may receive a special low gluten host.

It is not permissible for communicants to take the host and dip it into the chalice themselves. (Only the eucharistic minister may dip the host into the chalice and then place it on the communicant’s tongue.) However, if a communicant does dip the host into the chalice, the cup minister should adapt accordingly. It is not the proper time for a lesson in communion etiquette. Ministers may want to alert the person in charge of communion ministry to this practice so that further catechesis of the assembly may take place.

If the eucharistic bread or some particle of it falls, it should be picked up reverently by the minister. The consecrated bread may be consumed by the minister or completely dissolved in water which is then poured down the sacrarium (a special sink in the sacristy whose pipes run directly into the ground). Should consecrated wine be spilled, the area should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium. In either case, the actions of the eucharistic minister should be guided by reverence for the sacred species and the desire not to embarrass the communicant in any way.

A communicant may come forward with a pyx (a small metal container for transporting the host) in order to take communion to someone who is sick or homebound. Communion ministers should be aware of any special parish procedures in that case.

COMMISSIONING RITES

In order to emphasize the dignity of the role and to strengthen them for the service to which they have been called, extraordinary ministers should be commissioned according to the rite found in the *Book of Blessings* (Chapter 63). This ritual may be led by a priest or a deacon. The following exhortation from that rite presents a vision of this ministry:

“In this ministry, you must be examples of Christian living in faith and conduct; you must strive to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love. Remember that, though many, we are one body because we share the one bread and one cup. As ministers of Holy Communion be, therefore, especially observant of the Lord’s command to love your neighbor. For when he gave his body as food to his disciples, he said to them: ‘This is my commandment, that you should love one another as I have loved you’” (*Book of Blessings* 1875).

MINISTER OF HOSPITALITY

GUIDELINES

ORIGINS

Since the Second Vatican Council, laymen and women have been called to serve in a variety of liturgical ministries. But the ministry of hospitality existed within the church for a far longer period. Biblical references to “keepers of the threshold” who collected money offerings from the people appear in several places in the Hebrew Scriptures (2 Kings 22:4; 1 Chronicles 9:19). This role of “doorkeeper” was retained in the early Christian tradition as well, becoming a minor order (i.e. porter) on the path to priesthood during the medieval period. For generations ushers, or Ministers of Hospitality as they are often called now, have enhanced parish worship by welcoming people, seating them, taking up the offering, assisting those who become ill, and distributing parish bulletins. Because of this long history, it was not always easy to arrive at a new understanding of the usher’s role in parish worship after the revisions of Vatican II.

THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY IN THE LITURGY

Christian hospitality is centered in Christ. The people are coming as invited guests of the Lord himself (*Introduction to the Order of Mass*, #23). Hospitality is an expression of reverence for the presence of Christ in each member of the assembly. This is more than simply being “friendly” or “sociable.” Hospitality is about Christian love and concern and is rooted in the sacrament of baptism. True hospitality draws us together and opens us up to participate in the liturgy. An ancient Christian saying expresses it this way: “When a guest comes, Christ comes.”

The Minister of Hospitality is the first official representative of the community that worshipers meet, and, as such, must convey the sense that each person is welcome and essential to the community’s prayer. This ministry is one of genuine joy and care for others; thus one important quality for a Minister of Hospitality is to be a people-oriented person.

PARTICIPATION DURING THE MASS

Another important quality for Ministers of Hospitality is having a sense of liturgical prayer. Ministers of Hospitality, like other liturgical ministers, are first and foremost members of the worshiping Assembly. As such, they should join in the act of worship in the same manner as the Assembly. Even while performing specific tasks, (e.g., taking up the offering), they remain united to the Assembly, singing and praying in an active way. Never should their role separate them from the rest of the Assembly. They are to be present and attentive during the entire liturgy. This is not possible if ushers congregate in the back of Church or the vestibule during Mass.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MINISTER OF HOSPITALITY

The duties for a Minister of Hospitality begin well before the liturgy begins. Ministers need to be in place at least twenty minutes prior to the start of worship. They might first do a quick check of the worship space to make sure there is no clutter left from the previous service. But their primary duties are to greet people, hand out worship aids and assist parishioners in finding a place to sit. By offering a word of welcome, especially to visitors and those who may feel awkward for whatever reason, Hospitality Ministers help form the worshiping community.

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Ministers need to be informed if sacramental celebrations such as baptism, first communion or initiation rituals will take place during the liturgy; in that way, they can be more attentive to visitors, reserved seating areas and changes in the normal patterns. It is particularly important to be aware of those with special seating needs. Typically there is space designated for those in wheelchairs, as well as those who need interpreting services or use a hearing device.

In some churches Ushers/ Ministers of Hospitality are encouraged to fill the front of the church first in order to leave room for latecomers in the back. If people do arrive after the liturgy has begun, there should be an agreed upon method for assisting them in finding a seat. For example, they would be seated after the opening prayer but before the first reading, or they should be seated in between the readings, psalm, or Gospel, not *during* them. On days when there are large numbers of people present, hospitality ministers should know the various options available for seating overflow crowds.

An important but often overlooked aspect of this ministry deals with the physical aspects of the church space. Is it too hot or too cold in church? Do doors or windows need to be opened or closed? Do the sidewalks or parking areas need to be salted? Does slush need to be mopped up in the vestibule? Is the lighting adequate?

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE COLLECTION OF THE MONETARY OFFERING

The Ministers of Hospitality are responsible for gathering the collection from the Assembly. This is to be done in an unhurried fashion, and with respect and dignity. This money is a symbol of willingness on the part of the Assembly to offer themselves and their resources to Christ, and, ideally, is presented as part of the procession with the bread and wine, not as an afterthought. This offering, however, is placed in another location, and not placed near the altar. The Ministers of Hospitality may also be responsible for selecting people to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine. This should be done with an awareness of the diversity of the entire community.

DIRECTING PROCESSIONS

The Ministers of Hospitality facilitate the procession to communion. Their role is to foster an unhurried and reverent sharing in this Eucharistic meal. When needed, the Minister of Hospitality assists those with limited mobility. During once-a-year celebrations such as Passion Sunday and the Triduum, well-prepared ministers are essential in facilitating indoor or outdoor processions, the washing of feet, the Veneration of the Cross and service of light during the Easter Vigil.

CONCLUDING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministers of Hospitality distribute the bulletins to parishioners when Mass is ended. Note that this should not take place until after the procession of ministers has left the sanctuary. When the liturgy is completed, Ministers of Hospitality are also responsible for the general clean up of the worship space. This might involve collecting worship aids, candles, palms, etc.

WEEKLY COMMUNICATION

MINISTER OF HOSPITALITY

GUIDELINES

It is essential for Ministers of Hospitality to know what to expect at the liturgy for which they are scheduled. Is there a second offering? Or a guest presider who may not know the normal routines? An anniversary celebration? A “captain” may be present at each liturgy to inform the other Ministers of Hospitality of any special protocols. Other parishes post a weekly information sheet in the ministry check-in area detailing any special needs for each Mass that weekend.

RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

Persons involved in this ministry should know the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, telephones and cleaning supplies. Training in CPR and general first aid, as well as defibrillator training would be useful in addition to general ministerial training. Every Minister of Hospitality should be instructed to quickly call 911 in case of an emergency. It can also be very helpful if Ministers of Hospitality know which parishioners have medical training in case their assistance is needed.

WHAT DOES A MINISTER OF HOSPITALITY WEAR?

Because the minister is primarily a member of the Assembly, it is helpful if they are attired in their “Sunday best.” In some parishes, Ministers of Hospitality wear a uniform blazer for visibility so that they can be identified immediately in case of an emergency. In either case, a nametag identifying a person as a Minister of Hospitality would be helpful.

VISION FOR THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

“Think about the different people who gather at your parish on any given Sunday. Several may be searching for a church to call their own. Some of them are Catholic but are new to the area and are trying to decide which parish to join. Others may not be part of any church but are visiting different churches to find a community of faith to join. Others may be visitors on vacation or on work assignments. They are not seeking to become parish members, but they hope for some sense of being ‘at home’ among their Catholic brothers and sisters.

“Among those who are members of the parish, some are arriving after a frantic hour of trying to get the children dressed and out the door. Others may be coming to church directly from work or may be going to work after Mass. Some are feeling battered by unpleasant interactions with people at work or in the neighborhood. Others who live alone may not have had any contact with another human being for several days. Some come with a deep sense of gratitude to God, ready to give thanks. Others are there just because it is expected by their parents or their spouse or church law. Still others come bearing a heavy weight of loss and grief.

“Despite all their differences, however, all these people bear Christ within them, and all of them deserve to be welcomed in His name. As a greeter, you have the opportunity to give a gift to each person you meet at church. You can give them a sense of dignity and importance, a sense of welcome and a sign of the love of Christ that binds us into one body.” (Fr. Larry Mick)

MINISTERS OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

GUIDELINES

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance. As sacred song united to words it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy. Yet the function of music is ministerial; it must serve and never dominate. Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith. It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and more effectively. The quality of joy and enthusiasm which music adds to community worship cannot be gained in any other way. It imparts a sense of unity to the assembly and sets the appropriate tone for a particular celebration.

Music in Catholic Worship, #23

The Christian faithful who gather together as one to await the Lord's coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16). Singing is the sign of the heart's joy (Acts 2:46). Thus Saint Augustine says rightly, "Singing is for one who loves." There is also the ancient proverb: "One who sings well, prays twice."

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), #39

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE LITURGY

The Church's liturgy is inherently musical; thus, music is a necessarily normal dimension of every experience of communal worship. (*Liturgical Music Today, #5*). In the liturgy, however, music is an art placed at the service of communal prayer. "Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith. It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and more effectively. The quality of joy and enthusiasm which music adds to community worship cannot be gained in any other way. It imparts a sense of unity to the Assembly and sets the appropriate tone for a particular celebration." (*Music in Catholic Worship, # 23*). Yet as the late Brother Roger, founder of the Taizé Community remarked, "liturgical music must be like John the Baptist: always pointing to Christ, never calling attention to itself."

THE ASSEMBLY AS PRIMARY MUSICIAN

The primary musician for the liturgy is the Assembly. All other musicians are present at liturgy to support the Assembly's song. All musicians are also members of the Assembly. "The entire worshipping Assembly exercises a ministry of music. Some members of the community, however, are recognized for the special gifts they exhibit in leading the musical praise and thanksgiving of Christian assemblies."

We speak of the primacy of the Assembly because they are seen as the primary presence of Christ; they are the Body of Christ enfleshed in the world today. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst." (Mt. 18:20) "... Christ is really present in the very liturgical Assembly gathered in his name, in the person of the minister, in his word, and indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species" (GIRM, 27). It is because liturgical musicians are first of all members of this Body of Christ gathered to worship that they can minister to the liturgical assembly.

MINISTERS OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

GUIDELINES

THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Like all other ministers, the Director of Music is first of all a member of the Assembly, one called to surrender his or her individual talents to the service of the baptized community. The role of the Director of Music Ministry is unique among the many forms of lay ministry. Often the director will have formal academic training in music, providing him or her with formal skills in both instrumental and vocal music. The director must also have a comprehensive understanding of the various liturgical rites, especially the Mass and the liturgical year. The Scriptures, in particular the psalms, should have a central role in the musician's formation. Finally, the Director should be able to make sound pastoral judgments, work well with a wide variety of people, and develop his or her own personal prayer life.

Some of the Director of Music's functions are very obvious: accompanying the singing of the assembly on Sundays, holy days and at weddings, funerals and other sacramental celebrations; directing various choirs, and serving as cantor. Planning meetings with the parish liturgy committee, presiders, school or religious education personnel, the adult initiation director, engaged couples, and bereaved families are part and parcel of this ministry.

While the Director of Music ministries usually has a very public role in the liturgy, much of their work is invisible to most members of the Assembly. Choosing new music for the Assembly or the various choirs can be very time-consuming. Preparing for choir rehearsals, scheduling musicians, rehearsing with choirs, cantors and presiders, personal practicing, budgeting, record keeping and professional reading are critical but often overlooked aspects of this ministry. The person in charge of choosing the Assembly's repertoire must also be attentive to broader issues such as the quality of the sung texts, balancing various styles of music, inclusive language concerns, multi-cultural issues, passing on the heritage of the church's treasury of music, copyright laws, acoustical challenges, the needs of children and young adults, and the role of silence in the liturgy.

The Director of Music ministries has a vocation with built-in tensions. Compensation issues, evaluation procedures, continuing education needs, stylistic choices, and relationships with both ordained and professional staff and volunteer musicians can be a source of frustration. The temptation to entertain the assembly and the repetitive nature of the prayer also offer subtle challenges to the liturgical musician. A solid personal spirituality becomes essential.

CANTORS

The cantor's function is to lead and encourage the Assembly's in singing. Often the cantor has the special task of drawing all present into the proclamation of the Word of God through the psalm. "The human voice is the premier musical instrument in liturgical worship, and its basic repertoire is the psalms" (Fr. A. Kavanaugh). The cantor may also teach new music to the congregation. Cantors also serve as leaders of the musical prayer at funeral vigils and other sacramental rituals. Cantors need to be able to sing the text well with a pleasant voice.

Of all musical leaders, it is especially the cantor who requires direct visual and auditory contact with the Assembly. In every situation in which the musical leadership has visual contact with the Assembly, it is important to avoid a physical setting reminiscent of a stage or other entertainment venue. (*Ten-year Report of the Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers, #68*)

MINISTERS OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

GUIDELINES

THE CHOIR

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy emphasized that “Choirs must be diligently promoted. . .” (#114). The choir remains at all times a part of the gathered Assembly. It can serve that Assembly by leading it in sung prayer and by reinforcing or enhancing its singing. Occasionally, the choir may appropriately sing alone more elaborate music that can aid the prayerful reflection of the congregation. (Introduction to the Order of Mass, 18). Attention to pitch, tone, breath support and diction are essential for excellence.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

The organ and other instruments not only support and encourage participation through song but also, in their own right, can powerfully assist contemplation and express praise and a variety of human feelings before God. (*Introduction to the Order of Mass, #18*).

BASIC RESOURCES

Familiarity with the *General Introduction to the Roman Missal*, with the *Introduction to the Lectionary* and with each of the ritual books for the sacraments is essential. Official universal documents to be studied include the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and *Musicam Sacram* (Sacred Music). The primary statements from the bishops of the United States are *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Liturgical Music Today*. Two other useful national statements (not official resources) include *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report* and *The Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music*.

Subscriptions to periodicals such as *Pastoral Music*, *Rite, Ministry and Liturgy*, *GIA Quarterly*, *AIM* and *Today's Liturgy* can be very helpful. Membership in professional organizations such as the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and its Milwaukee chapter is an ongoing way of continuing one's education and formation. The following websites also have useful information:

www.npm.org

www.wlp.jspaluch.com

www.choristersguild.org

www.ocp.org

www.giamusic.com

The Prayer and Worship Office of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee provides a broad spectrum of assistance: a well-stocked musical/liturgical library; published guidelines and directives; workshops, classes, and conferences; and direct personal guidance.

MINISTRY AND LIFE

All liturgical ministers are ordained or commissioned to serve the Assembly's needs. But the service liturgical ministry renders the Assembly goes beyond the specific function a given ministry regularly performs in the liturgy. While the cantor, for example, may serve the Assembly by proclaiming the verses of the psalm, he or she also serves beyond the time of worship by being a living example of one who takes God's Word seriously and strives to live it in daily life. This connection between worship and daily life is achieved, according to Fr. Aidan Kavanaugh, “under grace by constant prayer, reflection, self-discipline, and continuing practice on the minister's part. This amounts to a fairly high sort of asceticism. . .” At a large parish, the primary musician may play for a funeral, one or two weddings, and three or four eucharistic liturgies on a given weekend. To be musically prepared and prayerfully present at each of these liturgies demands a high level of professionalism and self-discipline. Nevertheless, Paul Westermeyer states: “Anything less than excellence is disruptive to worship.”

COMMISSIONING OF LITURGICAL MUSICIANS

A formal rite of commissioning is a way of acknowledging the centrality and importance of music in the liturgy. Chapter 62 of the *Book of Blessings* has an Order of Blessings for various ministers, including musicians.

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GUIDELINES

The Sacred Scriptures, above all in their liturgical proclamation, are the source of life and strength... Love of the Scriptures is therefore a force reinvigorating and renewing the entire People of God. (Introduction to the Lectionary, #47).

The proper celebration of the Liturgy of the Word involves many elements and several of the faithful, but care must be taken so that the many human words and elements do not obscure the divine word itself. In this dialogue with the Lord, the people listen to the word, reflect on it in silence, respond to it in song, assimilate it, and apply it to their lives. Moved by it, they profess their faith and intercede for the needs of the Church and the world (Introduction to the Order of Mass #80).

The liturgical Assembly truly requires readers... Proper measures must therefore be taken to ensure that there are certain suitable lay people who have been trained to carry out this ministry (Introduction to the Lectionary, #52),

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Christ is really present in the very liturgical assembly gathered in his name, in the person of the minister, in his Word, and indeed substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species (GIRM #27).

When the Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his own Word, proclaims the Gospel. Therefore, all must listen with reverence to the readings from God's word, for they make up an element of greatest importance in the Liturgy (GIRM, #29).

For in the readings, as explained in the homily, God speaks to His people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through this word (GIRM #55).

During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered Assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared (GIRM #56). Any sort of haste that hinders recollection must be avoided (Introduction to the Lectionary #28).

The reader is proclaiming the Word of God. To do this well, that reader must be clear, understandable and knowledgeable about the Scripture being read.

By tradition, the act of reading the Scriptures is a ministerial, not a presidential, function. (GIRM #59) The readings before the Gospel should be proclaimed by a reader who has been trained for that ministry.

THE ROLE OF THE READER AT MASS

PROCESSION

In the procession to the altar, the reader takes a place with the other ministers, in front of the priest and deacon who are carrying the Book of the Gospels. When arriving at the altar, the reader bows

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with the other ministers, and goes to take his/her place (GIRM #49, 195, 120). The reader may be seated in the sanctuary with the other ministers or with the other members of the Assembly. (See Q & A.)

When no deacon is present, the reader may carry the Book of the Gospels, elevated slightly, walking just in front of the priest. If carrying the Book, the reader goes to the altar and places the Book on the altar, standing it upright so it can be seen by the Assembly.

Note that while the Book of the Gospels may be carried in procession, the Lectionary never is. (GIRM #118b)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

After the opening prayer, the reader goes to the ambo and proclaims the first reading from the Lectionary. The Lectionary should be marked and in place before Mass.

At the end of the reading, the reader speaks the acclamation *The Word of the Lord* and all respond *Thanks be to God*. In this short dialogue, the reader should maintain eye contact with the Assembly. Note that neither the Lectionary nor the Book of the Gospels is raised up when the concluding acclamation is proclaimed. This conclusion may also be sung, even by someone other than the reader. (Introduction to the Lectionary #18)

The observance of a prayerful silence is recommended after the first and second readings and again after the homily (Introduction to the Order of Mass #85).

During the psalm, led by the cantor from the ambo, the reader is seated. When there is no cantor, a reader may lead the responsorial psalm. "In this case, it is preferable that it be led by someone other than the reader of the first reading, in order to respect the force and effectiveness of the Liturgy of the Word as proclamation and response" (Introduction to the Order of Mass #15).

If there is a second reading before the Gospel, the reader proclaims it from the ambo, speaks the acclamation at the end and returns to his/her place. In some churches, the reader may need to remove the Lectionary from the ambo at this point.

Whenever there is more than one reading, it is better to assign the readings to different readers. However, one reading may not be divided between two (or more) readers. The only exception to this rubric is the reading of the Passion. The Passion may be divided among several readers. (Introduction to the Lectionary #52, GIRM #109).

The Gospel itself is always proclaimed by the deacon or a priest.

After the homily (or dismissal of catechumens), the reader may speak the Prayers of the Faithful from the ambo if no deacon is present. These petitions are addressed to the Assembly. The reader should already be in place at the ambo when the presider invites the people to pray; the reader should remain at the ambo until the concluding prayer is finished.

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RECESSIONAL

At the conclusion of the Mass, the deacon or reader does not process out with the Book of the Gospels. (Book of the Gospels #22) Neither the Lectionary nor the Book of the Gospels is carried out in the concluding procession. The reader may join in the procession in the same order as in the entrance procession, according to the custom of the parish, making the profound bow or genuflection at the altar with the other ministers.

THE READER AT OTHER LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

The ministerial role of the reader should be honored at all liturgical celebrations, including weddings, funerals, baptisms, celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours, and communal reconciliation and anointing services.

The role of reader, as outlined above for the celebration of Mass, is the same at these liturgical celebrations and should not be taken by a deacon or priest if at all possible.

It is permissible for someone who is not a member of the Catholic Church to proclaim one of the scripture readings on the occasion of a wedding or funeral Mass, if the local pastor judges it to be appropriate. The same norm applies to the General Intercessions. This is based upon the *Ecumenical Directory* (#133, 25 March 1993). It states, "The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that Church. On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, the Bishop of the diocese may permit a member of another Church or ecclesial community to take on the task of reader. (*Chancery Newsletter*, October 28, 2002)

MISCELLANEOUS

When there are options, check with the liturgy coordinator or presider as to whether the long or short form of the reading will be used.

If the reader is to proclaim the petitions, preview them before Mass for any difficult name pronunciations, etc.

In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, readers most often wear street clothes. Above all, one's clothing should not detract in any way from the reading.

The reader's bearing should be strong, deliberate and relaxed but never nonchalant. Hands should be on the ambo or holding the book. Excess motions can be a distraction.

General reader skills include (1) a knowledge of the different types of readings (e.g., history, laws, prophecies, and letters) and the different skills needed to proclaim each type of reading; and (2) a general sense of the readings for the day and the particular liturgical season.

Readers are encouraged to read through the entire chapter in which a reading is found in preparation for their proclamation. Read the selected reading aloud several times during the week. On the day itself, it may be helpful to avoid sugar, dairy and caffeine. Warming up the voice with gentle humming or singing is also helpful.

While technical skills are needed and necessary, a reader's preparation "must above all be spiritual." (Introduction, #55) Prayer and meditation on the reading allow the voice of God to speak to you and through you.