

Liturgy and Liturgical Ministry

What is “Liturgy”?

The word “liturgy” derives from the Greek word “leitourgia”, which means “public duty or service to the state, undertaken by a citizen”. Our Catholic liturgy is our public coming together as one people of God to pray, praise, offer thanksgiving and to celebrate the Rites and Sacraments. God summons His people to public worship, and we respond. Thus, Catholic Sacraments, Rites and liturgies belong to the whole Church: they are not private events. The whole Church, the Body of Christ, is nourished through Her liturgy.

Liturgical Lay Ministry

Following Vatican II, lay people (those who have not been ordained in the Sacrament of Holy Orders) have been invited and encouraged to serve God and His people through various liturgical ministries.

God’s Call to serve often begins as a whisper, a simple interest. The interest grows into desire to learn more about the ministry, and to become more involved. For more information about becoming involved in liturgical ministry at St. Joseph Catholic Church, please contact Deacon Felix, Pastoral Assistant for Liturgy at:

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Liturgical Ministries

- Alter Server
- Master of Ceremony
- Sacristan
- Extra-Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion
- Lectors
- Altar Care
- Altar Linens
- Liturgical Environment
- Host Team Ministries:
 - Greeters
 - Ushers
 - Junior Ushers

Volunteering for Liturgical Ministries

General requirements to volunteer for all liturgical lay ministers:

- Registered parishioner at Holy Family Catholic Parish
- In good standing with the Catholic Church
- In regular attendance at Mass
- Good understanding of the parts of the Mass and their meaning
- Participation in prayers and responses of the congregation during Mass
- Appropriate, respectful attire and demeanor
- Proper disposition for the ministry
- Arrive early as your ministry requires
- Participation in parish training and yearly retreats for the ministry

We provide:

- Training for all liturgical ministries
- Convenient on-line scheduling that allows ministers to:
 - Tailor schedules to accommodate personal and family life
 - Request substitutes, or accept substitute openings
- Prayer services & retreats for liturgical ministers

Descriptions and Specific Requirements of Liturgical Lay Ministries:

Altar Servers offer themselves in service to the Eucharist by assisting the priest at liturgical functions, especially during the Sacrifice of the Mass. Young or old, male or female, Altar Servers prayerfully prepare for their special ministry, and set an example of reverence for the Eucharist, and respectful church demeanor.

Requirements for Altar Server:

- Reverence for the Holy Eucharist
- Has been baptized and has received First Holy Communion
- Has completed 2nd Grade
- Regularly receives Holy Communion at Mass
- Willingness to learn the parts of the Mass and their meaning
- Willingness to learn and pray aloud the prayers of the Mass
- Willingness to learn the names and uses of the sacred vessels and other liturgical elements
- Mature enough to understand the responsibilities of the ministry, and to carry them out with appropriate reverence
- Ability to sit or move quietly, without calling attention to oneself
- Comfortable and able to carry oneself reverently in front of large crowds
- Comfortable wearing an alb (white robe)

Sacristans are lay people who prepare the credence table for the Sacrifice of the Mass, coordinate Eucharistic Ministers and the Lector before Mass begins, clear the credence table and tend to the final purification of sacred vessels following Mass. This ministry involves proper and reverent handling of the sacred vessels, measuring sufficient amounts of unconsecrated hosts and wine for the offertory, and a solid understanding of Eucharistic Minister positions in general, and their respective responsibilities during Mass. Eucharistic Set-Up Ministers also serve as one of the Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist at the Mass for which they set up.

Requirements for Sacristan:

- Reverence for the Holy Eucharist in attitude, demeanor and attire
- Fully initiated member of the Catholic Faith (received Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist)
- If married, must have received the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church
- Lives Christian values, and strives to live the Gospel in daily life
- At least 16 years of age
- Commissioned as an Extra-Ordinary Minister of the Holy Eucharist
- Has a good understanding of the Sacrifice of the Mass
- Understands the names and uses of sacred vessels used during Mass, and knows their location in the sacristy
- Comfortable handling the sacred vessels and the Holy Eucharist, and able to handle them with reverence and dignity
- Ability to coordinate other Extra-Ordinary Eucharistic Ministers before Mass, as needed
- Physical ability to maneuver through the sanctuary
- Punctual: arrives at least 30 minutes prior to Mass
- Responsible for clearing credence table and final purification of sacred vessels following Mass
- Responsible for securing sacred vessels and sacristy following Mass

Extra-Ordinary Minister of the Holy Communion (EMHC)

Ordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion are those consecrated in the Sacrament of Holy Orders: bishops, priests and deacons. Extra-Ordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion are lay people who are commissioned to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion when a sufficient number of Ordinary Ministers are not available, or to bring Holy Communion to the sick and homebound.

Requirements for Extra-Ordinary Eucharistic Minister:

- Fully initiated member of the Catholic Faith (received Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist)
- If married, must have received the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church
- Lives Christian values, and strives to live the Gospel in daily life

- Reverence for the Holy Eucharist in attitude, demeanor and attire
- Has a good understanding of the Sacrifice of the Mass
- At least 16 years of age
- Understands the names and uses of the sacred vessels used during Mass
- Comfortable handling the sacred vessels and able to do so with reverence and dignity
- Comfortable handling and distributing the Holy Eucharist, and able to do so with reverence and dignity
- Ability to perform duties of the ministry without calling attention to oneself
- Physical ability to maneuver through the sanctuary and the church

Lectors publicly proclaim the Word of God (with the exception of the Gospel) and offer the Prayer of the Faithful.

Requirements for Lector:

- Reverence for Sacred Scripture
- Fully initiated member of the Catholic Faith (received Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist)
- Personal preparation of the readings during the week prior to scheduled date
- Affinity for speaking before others
- Clear, articulate voice
- Ability to effectively read aloud
- Comfortable standing in front of the congregation

Altar Care

Caring for the altar is one of the ‘behind-the-scenes’ ministries that can easily go unnoticed. Those involved in this ministry meet typically on Friday mornings after daily Mass and spend some time cleaning the church and various housekeeping chores such as washing the glass doors, vacuuming the altar and tabernacle carpets, dusting the altar furniture, etc.

Requirements for Altar Linen Ministers:

- Reverence for the Holy Eucharist
- Reverence in the treatment of the sanctuary
- Reliability
- Ability to follow direction

Altar Linens

Caring for the altar linens is one of the ‘behind-the-scenes’ ministries that can easily go unnoticed, and that allows for flexibility in scheduling. Those involved in this ministry collect

the Altar cloths used during Mass and during Communion Calls to the Sick and Homebound. The cloths are taken home, soaked for purification and in preparation for laundering and ironing, then returned to the sacristy for future use.

Requirements for Altar Linen Ministers:

- Reverence for the Holy Eucharist
- Reverence in the treatment of the sacred cloths of the Altar
- Reliability
- Ability to follow direction

Liturgical Environment – Members of the Liturgical Environment Team work behind the scenes to decorate the narthex and liturgical space according to liturgical seasons and events. Artistic sense is not required, as the ministry can involve everything from ironing and sewing, to watering flowers, to helping haul boxes and set up Christmas trees. Some tasks need to be done at the church: Some can be done at home. Time commitment varies and can be flexible, depending on the liturgical season.

Requirements for Liturgical Environment Minister:

- Understanding of (or willingness to learn about) our Catholic Liturgical Year
- Reliability
- Flexibility
- Ability to follow direction
- Reverent demeanor while working within the church proper

Host Team Ministries:

Greeters are the first person people meet as they enter the church. They help set a welcoming atmosphere by smiling, opening doors, shaking hands and engaging in friendly greeting and conversation.

Men and women, young and old can be greeters. Families are invited and encouraged to serve together in this ministry.

Requirements for Greeters:

- Friendly disposition
- People-oriented with the desire to meet others and help them feel comfortable and welcome

Ushers are one of the first ministers people meet as they enter the church. Ushers welcome, offer hospitality and direction, and help ensure the safety and smooth flow of the congregation. Pre-Mass responsibilities include greeting people, holding doors, smiling and saying hello, helping to

seat people when necessary. During Mass, they assist with a count of the congregation, the collection, and with the Offertory and Communion processions. After Mass, Ushers distribute the parish weekly bulletin, and ensure that the church is tidy before they leave. Ushers also offer assistance in other areas, depending on the liturgical season or event. Ushering is a wonderful opportunity for families to serve together in a ministry.

Requirements for Ushers:

- At least 16 years of age
- People-oriented with the desire to serve the needs of others
- Ability to perform duties of the ministry with reverence, without calling attention to oneself
- Certification/willingness to be certified in “Protecting God’s Children” (if at least 18 years old)
- Certification/willingness to be certified in First Aid/CPR (if at least 18 years old)
- Arrive at least 20 minutes prior to Mass

Junior Ushers are not yet 16 years old, are at least in the 6th grade, and have a parent who is also an Usher. Junior Ushers are welcome to serve, providing their parents are ushering at the same Mass.

Requirements for Junior Ushers:

- At least in the 6th grade
- Parent serves as an Usher
- People-oriented with the desire to serve the needs of others
- Ability to perform duties of the ministry with reverence, without calling attention to oneself
- Arrive at least 20 minutes prior to the Mass