

**St. Thomas  
More  
Catholic  
Liturgical  
Ministry  
Handbook**

*Revised October 2006*

# Common to All Ministers

Each participant in liturgical ministry must:

- be a member of the Church, and be trained and commissioned at St. Thomas More Parish (some ministries allow exceptions, namely Greeters and Music);
- arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of Mass, and sign in at the table located just inside the main entrance;
- serve the purpose of facilitating true and authentic worship. The minister should always be aware that we represent, and not replace, the ministry of Jesus;
- be aware that at Liturgy, Christ is truly present in person of the priest, in the people gathered, the Word of God proclaimed, in the songs sung, and especially in the Eucharist consecrated.

Respect and reverence for the Presence of Christ in the people gathered, the priest-celebrant, and especially for the Real Presence of Christ in the eucharistic elements is essential. None of us is worthy of this service, but God has always called the unworthy to do God's work.

*Each minister is responsible for securing his or her own substitute!*

After Communion, Server 3 presents the book (Sacramentary) to the priest for the Closing Prayer. When the priest signals, open the book for the final prayer and then place the book in its proper place and return to your seat.

When the priest begins to move forward during the Closing Song, the Servers get the torches and assemble in front of the Altar. Bow with the priest and then lead the Recessional.



Questions?

*Contact the Altar Server Coordinator listed on the Schedule*

Server 3 is prepared to hold the Sacramentary for the priest for the Opening Prayer.

Now listen carefully to the Readings from scripture and the preaching by the priest or deacon.

When the Creed and Prayers of the Faithful are concluded, all Servers get the Offertory baskets and give them to the Greeters as they will be waiting at the foot of the Altar.

Servers 1 and 2 take the torches and go to the back to lead the Offertory Procession. At the same time, Server 3 brings the Sacramentary, communion cups, corporal, and purificators, and places them on the Altar.

When Servers 1 and 2 place the candles in their stands at the Altar, they proceed to the left side of the Altar and wait. Be open and attentive to the priest-celebrant. He may have the family place the gifts on the Altar, or do this himself, or ask (signal) you to do it.

When this is done, Server 3 comes to the altar with the water cruet which the priest will take; wait for the wine decanter and cruet to be given to you by the priest. At the same time, Servers 1 and 2 are getting the items for the washing of the hands (purification of hands).

After the Altar Servers receive Communion they return to their seats.

After Communion, the Servers see that the altar is cleared, then return to their seats.

# Lectors

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

John 1:1

“The word of God, proclaimed in the sacred Scripture, enlightens our minds and hearts. When the Scriptures are read in the liturgical assembly, God speaks to us and calls us to respond in faith and love. The ministry of the reader, then, is important to the life of the Church, for the reader proclaims God’s Living Word.”

(excerpt from Martin Connell’s *Workbook for Lectors & Gospel Readers*)

- **There should always be 2 separate readers! (Fr. Dorson)**
- Work as a Lector is Christ’s work, the Word of God living and active in the Church, and preparation is essential to being a good and effective minister of the Word.
- Lector Workbooks are available for use in the Resource Room. Feel free to check them out as needed. Other Lectors need to access these resources, so please return the workbooks to the Resource Room in a timely manner.
- The bulletin contains the scripture references for the readings at Sunday Mass. Lectors should be comfortable finding and preparing the readings from their own Bible (NAB version), from the link on our website ([www.stmva.com](http://www.stmva.com)) or from the US Bishops’ Liturgy website ([www.nccbuscc.org/nab](http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab)).
- Remember, good proclamations of the Word are clear, animated, confident, and convincing with attention to melody, rate, pause, volume change, and articulation.

- Please have respect and reverence for the presence of God in the Word in the ways you handle the sacred books.
- The Book of the Gospels, the Lectionary, the Announcements, and the Prayers of the Faithful can all be found in the Sacristy.

#### Lector 1:

- Retrieves the *Book of the Gospels* from the Ambo, and is found at the entrance to the Worship Space 5 minutes before mass begins;
- carries in the Book of the Gospels during the Procession, placing the book at the Ambo,
- does not bow at the Altar, as he or she is holding the book;
- adjusts the microphone to point at one's mouth before reading or turning the microphone on;
- proclaims the First Reading from the Ambo, turning the microphone ON before proclaiming the reading, and OFF after;
- approaches the Ambo at the conclusion of the Creed, and reads the Prayers of the Faithful from the Ambo, again, turning ON the microphone before reading, and turning it OFF after.

#### Lector 2

- Sits in the front row of seats next to the piano (with announcements in hand) 5 minutes before Mass begins;
- Reads the announcements from the Cantor Stand when the chimes ring (signal from the priest to begin) with the same microphone technique mentioned above;
- Proclaims the Second Reading from the Ambo.

The Gospel Book is not carried out in the Recessional, but is left enthroned at the Ambo by the priest-president after the homily.



#### Questions?

*Contact the Lector Coordinator listed on the Schedule*

# Altar Servers

*Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve...*

*Matthew 20:28*

The Altar Server assists the priest during Mass through specific actions. In doing so, each server sets an example to the congregation by active participation in the liturgy. This example reminds each person of his or her Baptismal calling to service. The ministry of Altar Server, then, is important to the life of the Church, for he or she is a visible sign of glorifying God through service to one another.

When the Altar Servers arrive at church, they go directly to the Sacristy to prepare the materials to be placed in the Sanctuary including:

- lighting the candles at the Ambo, (not the Altar);
- placing the Sacramentary, the cups, bowls, cruet, purificators, and hand-washing items for Consecration (water pitcher, bowl, towel)
- checking to make sure the Lectionary and the Prayers of the Faithful are at the Ambo;

Complete all tasks and be ready for the Processional five (5) minutes before mass. Please make your presence known to the priest-celebrant and let him know that everything is ready for mass to begin.

Slowly and deliberately, the Servers lead the entrance procession. Altar Servers carry the torches (Servers 1 and 2). They bow with the priest, then approach the Altar. They put the torches in the assigned spot and take their places at their seats.

## Greeters:

- Check with the head greeters for section assignments or any special instructions;
- Sit in the section of the church where they will collect the money offering and assist parishioners in their progress toward the Altar for Communion. They are responsible for the good order of the section where they are seated;
- The altar servers present the offering baskets to the Greeters who will stand on the floor in front of the altar. They reverence the Altar, take the collection baskets from the Altar Servers and proceed to the last row in their assigned section.
- When they have finished taking up the offering, follow the Procession of the Gifts to the front of the church. When the priest signals, they deposit the money in the designated place and return to their seats;
- After the Sign of Peace, Greeters move to the back of each section to assist with the Communion Procession. All Greeters should be attentive to the parishioners in their section and will notify the Communion Minister if someone in his or her section has special needs;
- Distribute bulletins in the commons when Mass is over.



## Questions?

*Contact the Greeters Coordinator listed on the Schedule*

# Eucharistic Ministers

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*

The Lord feeds and nourishes us with his life-giving body and blood. The Eucharist belongs to everyone and is the central celebration for us as Catholics. As we gather for Mass, Jesus invites us—all of us—to enter fully into our faith as active participants. The ministry of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, then, is important to the life of the Church, for the Communion Minister distributes the strength, healing, nourishment, and unity of holy communion into the community.

The first two Communion Ministers (CM1 & CM2) are designated to have the following special duties:

- They prepare enough hosts and wine for Mass, checking the amount of Consecrated Hosts in the chapel to avoid an overabundance. (A simple guide: 3 small bowls filled is enough to feed a *full* church) After preparation, place the wine and hosts on the gifts table at the back of the sanctuary;
- They check the sign-in sheet and ensure there will be 8 ministers for Mass;
- They decide who will retrieve and return the ciborium from the chapel. (bring it to the Altar after the sign of peace, and return it after Communion);
- Make sure all consecrated hosts are returned to the priest at the altar.

- After Mass, wash and return the sacred vessels used for Communion.

After the Sign of Peace, all Communion Ministers should proceed and form a line behind the priest-celebrant.

After they have all received Communion from the priest-celebrant, the priest-celebrant will give them Body or Blood to be distributed.

**Notes:**

1. If your section finishes early, help out in other sections.
2. If you are a cup-bearer, please consume the remainder of the consecrated Wine in the sacristy before returning to your seat.
3. When distributing Communion, simply say “Body of Christ” or “Blood of Christ”, as is appropriate. Please, do not say the person’s name, or over-animate your expression when doing this.

# Greeters

*Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.*

*Romans 12:12*

Greeters are ministers who play a key role in the living Body of Christ as the first contact believers have with the assembly when they arrive for mass. How ushers greet and welcome both newcomers and longtime parishioners make a world of difference in how people prepare for the upcoming liturgy. The ministry of the Greeter, then, is important to the life of the Church, for the Greeter reflects God to others through warm hospitality.

It is necessary for the first two names on the schedule (head greeters) to arrive at least 25 minutes before Mass begins to assist visitors, the handicapped, and to receive instructions for anything extraordinary to that particular Mass.

Head Greeters:

- Select and instruct individuals to bring forward the gifts during the Offertory Procession;
- Bring the food basket in from the commons to the gift table after Mass begins;
- Turn off all lights in the worship space and take the food basket into the food pantry when Mass is over.



**Questions?**

*Contact the Eucharistic Minister Coordinator listed on the Schedule*