

Ministries and Roles within the Liturgical Assembly at Mass

When we come together for Mass, we do not come as just a crowd of people, but as the Body of Christ. We have various ministries and roles within this Body which flow from a share in the priesthood of Christ that we received in our Baptism. Thus we are made capable of participating in the public worship, or liturgy, of the Church which is the **right** and **duty** of all the baptized.

Role of Ordained Ministry

While we all share in the priesthood of Christ which delegates us to worship, some members of the Church are called by God to serve in the ministerial priesthood as bishops and priests. **Bishops and priests are privileged to act in the liturgy in the very person of Christ, on behalf of his people.** These ministers pray aloud the most sacred prayers of our faith and explain God's Word. They preside over the sacred mysteries and feed God's people on the body and blood of Christ. Others are ordained to the ministry of **Deacon**. Deacons proclaim the Gospel and assist the bishop and priest in exercising their sacred duties.

Role of Members of the Assembly

We the baptized need to understand that part of our duty regarding liturgy is to accept some responsibility for the liturgy, to place ourselves and our God-given talents at the service of the liturgical community. As members of the assembly, we have the responsibility to join in praise and thanksgiving, in song and spoken word; to listen attentively to God's Word; and to exercise our baptismal priesthood in prayer for the Church, the world, and all in need during the General Intercessions.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist we join our prayer to that of the celebrant, offering Christ the Victim, and offering ourselves as well. Our participation culminates in the reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the sacrament which unites us more fully with Christ our Head and with each other.

Specific Roles within the Assembly

Besides what we all do together, some serve the whole assembly in specific ways by using their time and talent in many ways. Some do this during Mass itself as altar servers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, cantors, choir members, instrumentalists, leaders of song, ushers, and greeters. Others contribute their time and talent outside of Mass time by planning and organizing the liturgy; keeping the church, vestments, and vessels clean and in order; and decorating the church to reflect the spirit of the liturgical feast or season.

All of us, by our presence and efforts to participate, minister to the celebrant, to others who serve in liturgical roles, and to one another. Together we make visible the Body of Christ here and now.

In what ways do you serve the assembly? How does your service reach beyond the assembly because we are sent forth from the assembly to love and serve the Lord?

The Liturgy is about the action of God's own people, each with different offices and roles. Each office and role is one of service, not of privilege. Each is a mirror of Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples and instructed his followers to imitate his example of service.