

The sign of the loaves and fishes has been chosen to illustrate the cover of this leaflet. It reminds us of the story of when people were hungry and had nothing to eat. Jesus was able to take the few loaves and fish that a child had to offer and after he blessed them they became food sufficient to feed very many people.

Pope John Paul has asked that we keep this year – October 2004 to October 2005 – as a Year of the Eucharist. He asks that during this year we remember how Jesus continues to feed his people through the Mass. It is now not with loaves and fish that he feeds us but with bread and wine that, through the prayer of the Church and the ministry of the priest, becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Through the sacrament of the Eucharist Jesus shares his life with us, so that we might live life well, in communion with him.

The sign of the loaves and fish perhaps also reminds of the ministry that you carry out in the Church. When we minister we bring what we have – our skills as a reader, or a server, or a musician or singer – and use them for the benefit of others. We prepare well and we do the best we can – but sometimes it might feel that we have little to offer.

Yet our contribution is an important part of the Mass. Both through the particular things we do as a minister, but also through the way we take part in the Mass as a whole, as people who are there to listen to God's Word, to join ourselves with the offering of the great prayer of Thanksgiving, and to receive Christ in Holy Communion. Our prayer and our gifts are received by Jesus and become part of the great blessing that is the Mass.

What do servers do?

Servers hold the book while the presiding priest proclaims the presidential prayers with outstretched hands. They bring and hold such things as books, thuribles, water jug and towel, plates and dishes, and microphones.

They lead the entrance and concluding processions with the cross and candles; they escort the deacon (or priest) to the ambo and stand at his side while he proclaims the Gospel reading. They may, on more solemn occasions, accompany the procession with the gifts. They look after the thurible, prepare it for the priest or deacon, and themselves may incense the assembly and other ministers.

- The number of servers will depend upon the circumstances and the tasks to be performed.

CTM 47

Why?

Because when the celebration of the Mass is interrupted by things not being at the right place at the right time, it will usually distract people from their praying of the Mass. The servers' key role is to make sure that things run smoothly without distraction.

Because servers are usually very visible to the congregation it is important for the same reason that during the parts of the Mass when they have no particular serving to do, they serve by simply joining in the praying of the Mass along with everyone else. That way if people see the servers they will receive a good example – the servers will still be serving but in another way!.

Preparing to Serve

In preparing to serve each week: • Look at the readings and prayers of the Mass and use them for your prayer.

- Reflect on how they speak of the love of God for all, and at the sort of life they invite us to live
- Spend time in prayer, praying for yourself, and the other ministers at Mass (for example, the Readers, the Musicians, the Clergy) — that the service you will offer together will help the whole congregation celebrate Mass well.
- Ask God for the grace to be attentive both as a minister and as a member of the assembly throughout the celebration.
- Ensure that you will be ready for Mass in good time to help with any things which need to be done before Mass can start.



God of power and mercy,
Only with your help
can we offer you fitting service and praise.

May we live the faith we profess
and trust your promise of eternal life.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

Collect: 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Servers & their ministry at Mass

