

Lay Liturgical Ministry

The faithful should not refuse to serve the People of God gladly whenever they are asked to perform some particular ministry in the celebration.

Lay ministers may be deputed to serve at the altar and assist the priest and the deacon; they may also be deputed to distribute Holy Communion as extraordinary ministers.

Other laypersons may be commissioned to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture. They should be truly suited to perform this function and should receive careful preparation, so that the faithful by listening to the readings from the sacred texts may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture.

The psalmist's role is to sing the Psalm or other biblical canticle that comes between the readings. To fulfil this role correctly, it is necessary that the psalmist have the ability for singing and a facility in correct pronunciation and diction.

The schola cantorum or choir exercises its own liturgical role, ensuring that the parts proper to it, in keeping with the different types of chants, are properly carried out and fostering the active participation of the faithful through the singing. This also applies to other musicians, especially the organist.

105. The following also exercise a liturgical role: the sacristan; the commentator; those who take up the collection in the church; those who, meet the faithful at the church entrance, lead them to appropriate places, and direct processions.

GIRM 97, 100–105

Some Questions

- Is the diversity of the parish reflected by the parish's commissioned ministers?
- What are the priorities with regard to ministers' initial and continuing formation?
- How is good coordination between ministries achieved? How might it be improved?

Further References

- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*: 91–111, 115–116
- *Celebrating the Mass*: 25–51
- *Redemptionis Sacramentum*: 40, 43–47, 146–161
- *The Sign We Give*, especially Part Three.

Practical Points

- Commissioning of the parish's liturgical ministers once a year indicates the importance of the service they offer. Suitable dates would include *Corpus Christi* or anniversary of the Dedication of the church. It might be combined with the commissioning of other ministers also, e.g. catechists
- Good communication of planning decisions helps ministers prepare well for their ministry
- Offering formation to different categories of ministers together helps develop their sense for a sense of mutual collaboration in the service of the parish.
- The spiritual formation of ministers is of equal importance with their 'technical' formation.

**Liturgy
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Questions for Groups

1. What is good about current practice?
What concerns do you have?

4. Who is most directly involved in these matters, e.g. liturgical ministers?
What formation/information is necessary to engage them in the renewal of current practice?

2. In what ways does the documentation affirm or challenge your current practice?

5. How will the assembly be engaged in the process?
What, in particular, needs addressing at Sunday and/or weekday celebrations?

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

6. How will you know whether the formation has worked?