



**Diocese of Salt Lake City
Office of Worship**

Ministries and Roles within the Liturgical Assembly at Mass

“The celebration of the Eucharist is the action of Christ and of the Church, namely, of the holy people united and ordered under the Bishop. It therefore pertains to the whole Body of the Church, manifests it, and has its effect upon it. Indeed, it also affects the individual members of the Church in a different way, according to their different orders, functions, and actual participation… All, therefore, whether ordained ministers or lay Christian faithful, in fulfilling their function or their duty, should carry out solely but totally that which pertains to them.”

General Instructions of the Roman Missal, ¶ 91

Ordained Ministries in the Liturgy

When the Church comes together in the liturgical assembly to celebrate the Mass, or any other sacrament, we gather in a variety of ministries and roles. Through the sacrament of Holy Orders, ordained priests and bishops make present Christ as head of the Church. They are called to act in the person of Christ, on behalf of his people. In the celebration of Mass, deacons proclaim the Gospel, occasionally preach the homily and assist the bishop and priests in exercising their sacred duties.

Other Liturgical Ministries

In addition to the ordained ministers, some roles in the Liturgy are exercised by lay people as altar servers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, cantors, choir members, musicians, ushers, sacristans and the assembly. Those engaged in liturgical ministry need to be well prepared and know how to carry out their role with reverence, dignity and understanding.

The Role of the Assembly

The General Instructions remind us that through our baptism, all are responsible for the worship of God by the Church. Therefore, that responsibility includes full conscious active participation in the Liturgy by all.

Sacramental Celebrations and Liturgical Roles

This variety of offices and roles is desirable, and each minister should function in only one role during a liturgical celebration. Therefore, whether ordained ministers or lay, in fulfilling their function or their duty, should carry out solely but totally that which pertains to them.¹ For example, the cantor should only serve in the role of the cantor, and not take on the additional role of the altar server or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion in the same service. This would also be true during sacramental celebrations, such as First Eucharist, Confirmation or a Wedding as the role of the candidate or couple is that of one receiving the sacrament rather than serving an additional role as an usher or musician. With full attention focused on receiving the sacrament, they are better able to experience God's grace through the sacramental sign and are drawn more deeply into the liturgy and the paschal mystery.

The Liturgy is about the action of God's own people, each with different offices and roles. From Bishop and priest to that of usher, musician and assembly, by fully participating in Eucharist we mirror Christ in his actions and service.

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¹ Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 28.