



## Liturgical Ministers for Weddings

### Selection of the Liturgical Ministers

The liturgical ministers for the wedding liturgy include the following:

- Presider / celebrant (priest or deacon)
- Cross bearer
- Server(s)
- Lectors
- Person to read the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)
- Cantor
- Accompanist (organist, pianist) and other musicians as needed
- Hospitality ministers
- Witnesses

For a wedding Mass, the following may also be needed:

- Gift bearers
- Communion ministers

The pastoral staff of the parish where the wedding liturgy will take place will assist in providing liturgical ministers as needed. The bride and groom usually select the witnesses for the wedding. They may also choose persons to serve as hospitality ministers, the person to carry the cross in procession, the servers to assist the presider, the lectors (two), the person to read the Prayer of the Faithful, the cantor, the gift bearers, and the Communion ministers. Some of these ministers require specific training for their particular ministry (see below).

### Ministry Descriptions

**Hospitality Ministers:** 2-4, depending on the size of the church and the assembly.

Qualifications: no specialized training; some instructions given prior to the liturgy; should be aware of the location of restrooms and emergency exits/equipment

Duties: The hospitality ministers welcome people as they come to the church, hand out the worship aids/programs, assist people to find their seats, and provide assistance to locate restrooms or phone as needed. These ministers may also assist the assembly to start the Communion procession to the appropriate communion station.

Vesture: no special vesture required

Location: in the gathering space or near the back of church; sit with the assembly when appropriate

**Cross Bearer:** (1 person)

Qualifications: must be able to carry the processional cross and be present at the rehearsal to receive a few instructions

Duties: leads the opening procession and carries the processional cross down the aisle (does not bow to the altar while carrying the cross); places the cross into a stand in the sanctuary as directed; leads the procession out of the church at the end of the liturgy

Vesture: may or may not wear an alb (white robe)

Location: If the cross bearer wears an alb, he/she sits with the servers during the liturgy. Otherwise, he/she may sit anywhere in the assembly.

**Servers:** (1-2 persons)

Qualifications: liturgical training as altar servers

Duties: accompany the processional cross down the aisle in the opening procession, reverencing (bowing to) the altar if not carrying candles; bring the book to the presider for the opening prayer, post-communion prayer, and the final blessing; assist during the Rite of Marriage as needed (e.g. to hold the book for the presider); help receive the gifts from the gift procession; help prepare the altar for Communion; accompany the cross down the aisle in the closing procession

Vesture: usually wears an alb

Location: near the sanctuary

**Lectors:** (2 persons, one for each scripture reading before the gospel)

Qualifications: Lector formation/training; ability for public proclamation

Duties: Unless a deacon is serving at this liturgy, one of the lectors may carry the Book of Gospels in the opening procession, walking behind the servers. When the lector reaches the altar he/she places the Book of the Gospels on the altar, reverences the altar with a profound bow, then takes a place in the assembly. During the Liturgy of the Word, the lector proclaims the first or second scripture reading from the ambo, ending with "The Word of the Lord." The lector remains in place at the ambo for a brief period of silence, approximately 15 seconds.

Vesture: no special vesture required

Location: Lectors sit with the rest of the assembly. If the lector needs to cross in front of the altar on the way to the ambo or if approaching from the center aisle, a profound bow to the altar is appropriate (bow from the waist).

**Person to Read the General Intercessions** (Prayer of the Faithful)

Qualifications: no specialized training; must be able to read slowly and articulately

Duties: The person who will read these petitions comes to the ambo after the Exchange of Vows and Rings in the Marriage Rite. The presider gives the introduction to this prayer. The reader of the intentions announces each one slowly and clearly, pauses for about 10 seconds after stating the intention, then adds, "We pray" or "We pray to the Lord." The rest of the assembly responds with "Lord, hear our prayer" or a similar response as indicated. The reader stays in place at the ambo until the presider completes the concluding prayer of the intercessions, then returns to his/her seat in the assembly.

Vesture: no special vesture required

Location: This reader sits with the assembly and comes to the ambo to read the intercessions.

## **Cantor:**

Qualifications: Cantor formation/training/experience

Duties: The cantor sings the Responsorial Psalm from the ambo, sings the verses of the Communion song, the verse of the Gospel Acclamation, and if sung, the verses of the Glory to God. The cantor supports the assembly's song as much as is needed for the opening song, the acclamations and the responses/refrains within the liturgy. The cantor also engages in dialogue with the assembly for the Lamb of God litany and may also sing the Intercessions.

Vesture: no special vesture required

Location: The cantor sings the Responsorial Psalm and may sing the intercessions from the ambo. The rest of the cantor's ministry takes place at another place, normally a music stand near the instrumentation. During the scripture readings, the cantor sits in the assembly, comes forth from the assembly to proclaim the Psalm, and returns to sit within the assembly for the next reading.

**Gift Bearers:** 2-4 persons. It is not necessary for everyone in the gift procession to carry something.

Qualifications: no specialized training; some instructions given prior to the liturgy

Duties: After the Prayer of the Faithful, the gift bearers go to the table where the bread and wine are located. Usually this table is in the back of church. The gift bearers carry the paten(s) with the hosts/bread and the flagon of wine down the aisle to the altar. The priest/deacon receives the bread and wine. After presenting the gifts, the gift bearers reverence the altar (bow from the waist), and then return to their places in the assembly.

Vesture: no special vesture required

Location: The gift bearers sit with the assembly, come forth for the gift procession, and then return to their seats.

**Communion Ministers:** 2-9 persons, depending on the church and the size of the assembly

Qualifications: must have completed diocesan/parish formation and training for this ministry; must be commissioned and presently serving as a communion minister in his/her parish. If the Communion minister does not normally serve at the parish where the wedding liturgy will take place, permission from the priest presiding at the wedding liturgy should be requested.

Duties: Those helping with the distribution of Holy Communion come into the sanctuary area after the Invitation to Communion ("O Lord, I am not worthy ..."). After the priest receives the Body and Blood of Christ, the Communion ministers come to the altar to receive communion and to receive their vessels for distribution. Communion ministers may distribute the Body of Christ from the paten or the Blood of Christ from the chalice from their stations, assigned before Mass begins. After the entire assembly has received Communion, the Communion ministers take their vessels to a side table or the sacristy and help to consume the remaining Precious Blood and Sacred Hosts. After Mass, the Communion ministers may help with cleaning and putting away the vessels.

Vesture: no special vesture required

Location: Communion ministers sit with the assembly, come from the assembly to serve at the altar, and then return to the assembly seating.