

"And with Your Spirit:" Training Methods for Liturgical Ministers!

- 1. Training**
- 2. Supervision**
- 3. Evaluation (and Ministry Limits)**

Naming Some of the Ministries:

Lector	Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion
Sacristan	Altar Server
Usher	Ministers of Music
Psalmist	Environment Ministers

1. Training and General Formation:

Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal
2002 General Instruction to the Roman Missal

Basic Knowledge of the Liturgical Calendar
Basic Knowledge of Liturgical Ministries
Basic Knowledge of the Mass (and the Rites)
Basic Knowledge of the official Liturgical tools/books/vessels which they use in their ministry
Basic Knowledge of the Church Building in which they minister

Framework for Catechesis on Liturgical Ministry:

Principles taken from the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*:

1. The Dignity of Baptism (General Introduction 3-6)

Baptism is therefore, above all, that sacrament of that faith by which, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we respond to the Gospel of Christ. Further, it is the sacrament by which the recipients are incorporated into the Church and are built up together in the Spirit into a house where God lives, into a holy nation and a royal priesthood.

They (catechumens) are prepared for this high dignity and led to it by the scriptural readings, the prayer of the community, and their own profession of the belief in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. The Spiritual Journey

The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place (RICA #5).

This journey includes not only the periods for making inquiry and maturing, but also the steps marking the catechumens' progress, as they pass, so to speak, through another doorway or ascend to the next level (RICA #6).

3. The Catechetical and Formational Process

It pertains to the bishop for his own diocese:

- * to set up the formation program of the catechumenate and to lay down norms according to local needs
- * to depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to give the exorcisms and blessings (RICA #34).

4. Mystagogy and Ministry: Life in the Church

Just as their new participation in the sacraments enlightens the neophytes' understanding of the Scriptures, so too it increases their contact with the rest of the faithful and has an impact on the experience of the community. The faithful, in turn, should derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook (#246).

Some History regarding Ministry:

Until January 1973, "ministries" did not exist in the Latin Church; clerics were ordained to minor orders (reader, acolyte, porter and exorcist). These were seen as pre-sacerdotal steps.

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (#76) stated: *Both the ceremonies and texts of the ordination rites are to be revised.*

Ministeria quaedam (Paul VI, 1972) states:

- * No one should be instituted in the ministries of reader or acolyte without a period of thorough preparation in all the aspects of the respective ministry. This period, as well as the program of formation, shall be determined by the Ordinary; it should generally be from three to six months in length, in order to ascertain and develop the specific requirements of the respective ministry and the necessary leadership qualities.

- * The rite of institution is a public celebration according to the liturgical rites revised by the Apostolic See.

Conclusions:

Successful diocesan/parish formational programs/processes for the formation and training of lectors and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, or any other ministry, must be a balance of these perspectives. They must help the candidate for ministry to answer a number of questions:

- * What does it mean to be a (fully initiated) member of the Church?
- * What tools/gifts have assisted me on this conversion experience or journey to the Church? (Why do I remain a part of the Church?)
- * If I accept the responsibility of ministry in the Church, what is required of me to exercise this ministry fully?
- * Why do I want to do this - why do I want to continue to do this ministry?
- * What is the connection between this ministry and my life?

Some Qualifications for Ministry:

Diocesan Guidelines:

Those who fulfill the ministry of should be fully initiated members of the community and of sufficient age and competency to undertake this ministry.

Further, as a footnote, For those who serve in public ministry in the Church, faith must be supported by visible signs. To this end, the following qualifications might be employed to assist the pastoral team: basic human wholeness, manifestation of the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity); manifestation of the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance); a positive sense of Church; no impediments to ministry; and a willingness to be formed in the ministry of the Church.

Implications:

- * Age and status of candidates for ministry
- * Competency of candidates
- * Tenure of those who serve in ministries

- * certification (mandates) and commissioning (blessing)
- * leadership (**Kingdom** or *kingdoms!*)

Examples of Specific Knowledge to be used in Individual Ministries:

Each ministry requires a command/control of one's presence. The ability to be able to exercise each ministry with dignity, decorum, reverence and without hastiness. This principle should not either be too restrictive nor too loose.

Lector: Scripture, Lectionary, Book of Gospels
Communication Skills, Electronic Sound Projection

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion:
GIRM, Order of Mass, Eucharist

Sacristan: GIRM, Order of Mass, The Rites

Altar Server: GIRM, Order of Mass, The Rites, Liturgical Books and Vessels

Usher: Order of Mass, Ordinary and Extraordinary Procedures

Environment Ministers: GIRM, Order of Mass, The Rites, Liturgical Books and Vessels

2. Supervision:

Ultimately there needs to be someone subordinate to the pastor in supervising the internal workings of each ministry. Even a seasoned parish director of Liturgy should employ non-tenured ministry heads to assist with the many tasks of recruitment, training, direct supervision, correction and evaluation. All of these must be done in a spirit of Christian charity and on an ongoing basis.

3. Evaluation:

