

Beacons of Light Update: Liturgical Ministries

In our Catholic faith, we often talk about how the Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life” (Catechism 1324). This is why we attach such importance to the celebration of the Mass. The Church says that in the Mass, as in all liturgical celebrations, we as the People of God and the Body of Christ are able to participate in the work of God, especially in His work of redemption. In doing so, we are, among other things, privileged to offer ourselves in worship to the Father, through Jesus, in the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Bill has been writing about the Mass, including its structure and meaning, so I won't attempt to do that this week. Instead, I just want to briefly highlight an aspect of the Mass. The Church, through the Second Vatican Council, encourages us to actively participate in the Mass. This primarily refers to our interior disposition, being attentive to what God is speaking and doing, while responding with our heartfelt worship. This interior disposition, then, can allow us to also join in the externals of worship, through the responses, singing, and gestures of the Mass that are proper to us.

Within this, of course, there are also special roles that individuals, at times, may take on to aid in the communal celebration and worship. These special roles aren't limited to the priests and deacons, either (though they are distinct from them).

And so, I wanted to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to all of those within Stella Maris who so generously give of their time and talent to assist us in those roles (often referred to as liturgical ministries). There are a lot of you, and for that, I am deeply appreciative.

The list includes all of our deacons who live out their vocation of service, in part, through their role in the Mass, as well as our lectors who proclaim God's word and lead us in prayer as they read the intercessions, our altar servers, who not only perform various functions but can demonstrate a genuine love for our Lord through their actions, setting an example for all of us, and our extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, who assist the clergy in distributing the Body of Christ, both at Mass and in taking our Lord to our sick and homebound.

I thank our ushers and greeters who joyfully welcome everyone in, seeking to share with them Christ's own love, as well as help facilitate our offering back to the Lord. And our church cleaners, our art and environment volunteers, and our sacristans who come at various times, arriving early and staying late at Mass to make sure everything is in its proper place and everyone is ready to go, setting the stage for a beautiful celebration. Our musicians, cantors, and choir members, who add to that beauty by sharing their gifts and voices in praise to the Lord.

As I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart, I also want to encourage others to prayerfully consider whether you are able to help with any of this. We could definitely use it. I reiterate, of course, that our participation in the Mass does not necessitate that we take on one of these specific roles. There are many valid reasons why we may not do so at this time. If someone is able and feeling that call to help, I invite you to reach out.

If you feel called to learn more about or join a liturgical ministry at Stella Maris, you can visit our website at stellamarisfamily.org/liturgical-ministries (or scan the QR code below) and fill out the interest form. You can also email me at pastor@stellamarisfamily.org. We will schedule training sessions soon, so watch for those details. To help us schedule them at times and locations that will work best, it's helpful to know who might be interested.



Again, to all those who help us in our most important activity, namely, the celebration of the Mass, and all those who bless our Stella Maris family in so many other ways, I say, “Thank you.”



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Tim Ralston".

Fr. Tim Ralston
Pastor of Stella Maris