

# OUR LADY *Star of the Sea* CATHOLIC CHURCH

## Eucharistic Ministers Work as the Lord's Hands

**W**ill you be the Lord's hands and bring His Body and Blood to His people?

This is the question ministry coordinator Cathy Damone asks new Eucharistic Ministers when they have finished training to serve on the altar. It's an idea that gets to the very heart of what it means to fulfill such a role.

"That's basically what we're asking you to do – to be the Lord's hands," Cathy says.

Fulfilling the role of Eucharistic Minister means taking an important place among those who serve our parish at every Mass. Far from just helping make sure each parishioner receives Communion in an orderly and timely fashion, these individuals are also commanded with taking special care of the Eucharist and possessing an attitude of reverence worthy of their job.

"It really humbles you and brings you closer to the Eucharist and to God," Cathy says. "It has really changed the way I look at the whole Mass."

Cathy believes she got the calling to serve from the example of her parents, both of whom served as Eucharistic Ministers for nearly 30 years. The ministry is one way busy parishioners can lend their time and talents to Our Lady Star of the Sea with a minimal time commitment.

"It's the one ministry that there's no meetings," Cathy says. "You're going to church every Sunday anyway, you're already there, you're in the presence of the Eucharist. It requires training, and then you can literally choose what you want to do, whether it be once a week or just once a month. You tell us the dates you can do. It's really a very friendly ministry that you can choose when to do and nothing affects your schedule other than attending Mass every Sunday."



*Eucharistic Ministers gather at the altar. These individuals are charged with bringing the spirit of Christ to their fellow parishioners through His Body and Blood during Mass.*

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## Stewardship

# Hannah, the Good Steward

**W**hat should we do when our prayers are answered?

Is there anything left to do after we have sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we would probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do for Him. Instead, God

receives our thanks and tells us to “go and do likewise.” That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That is the definition of stewardship!

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most poignant examples of stewardship in the

entire Bible. The first chapter teaches us of an unhappy, barren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah’s elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart’s desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow, as Hannah kept her promise to God by taking Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The Book of Samuel tells us that once Samuel became Eli’s servant, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.

Indeed, Hannah knew that Samuel was truly a gift from God – an answered prayer. Hannah’s response is that of the Good Steward – with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet, through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an entire nation. Samuel would, in time, become one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of stewardship, while the results may just be impossible to miss! However, He asks that we continue to be faithful in either case. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us – at whatever the cost, we are to “go and do likewise.”





*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## We Are Blessed as a Church and a Nation

Dear Parishioners,

The month of July may seem like a bit of an “in-between” month. Of course, it sits in the middle of summer. During this last month of June, we shared in a number of solemnities and celebrations – these served to remind us of the incredible gifts we have received as Catholics, from the Holy Trinity to the Body and Blood of Christ.

Now, a look at the calendar shows us that all of the Sundays this month are in Ordinary Time. We know that Ordinary Time is anything but “ordinary,” even though it might seem that way – especially after a month of celebrations.

However, one thing happens this month that is certainly unique to us as Americans – Independence Day. We are Catholics, but we also are Americans, and we should be proud to be both – grateful for the gift of faith, and equally grateful for the gift of liberty we receive as American citizens.

Yet, to be Catholic and American should not mean choosing one over the other. These allegiances should be complementary. Our Catholic faith states that we need to work together as fellow citizens for the common good of everyone in this great country. Through the Constitution, our Founding Fathers guaranteed us of religious rights to contribute to our common life together.

Freedom is a special inheritance we have received, fought for by many at a great price, and it is a heritage that must be guarded – we are truly stewards of the gifts of freedom.



In 1886, just over 140 years ago, Bishop James Gibbons of Baltimore was made the second American Cardinal. He attributed the progress of the Church in America to the “civil liberty we enjoy in our enlightened republic.” He continued to say that “in the genial atmosphere of liberty, the Church blossoms like a rose.”

July is not just a time for us to celebrate – it is also a time for us to blossom. It is not a time to cease praying or working to build the Kingdom of Christ. Rather, it is a time to work even more diligently to express our appreciation for our many gifts, and to share them with others. We are blessed – by the gifts of our faith and the gifts of freedom – and we must always remember to thank God for that.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan  
Pastor



# Growing in Love at the Altar Service



To Brendan White, serving Christ at the altar can be quite a phenomenal experience.

“My favorite memory of serving is of the first time I served at the Easter Vigil, and it absolutely blew my mind when we processed up to the altar by candlelight,” he says. “The smell of the incense, the sound of the chants, and the flickering candlelight created such an intense, beautiful atmosphere.”

In the six years he has been an altar server, Brendan has found it to be a deeply rewarding spiritual experience.

“The thing that I like the most about serving is how close it brings me to everything that happens up on the altar,” he says. “Serving Mass has helped me to attain a much greater understanding and reverence for the miracle of the Eucharist, because it drives you to pay very close attention to all of the prayers and blessings that you otherwise would not notice from the congregation. Altar serving has definitely made me a better steward, because it has made me into a more reverent person.”

And, according to Michael McVeigh, who coordinates the 58 servers at our parish, Brendan isn’t the only young person who has found altar serving to be enlightening and meaningful.

“I believe that it builds up their confidence in themselves and helps them to learn to serve their parish community,” Michael says. “These are skills that will help them all throughout their lives. Sometimes, they serve in front of 2,000 people at Mass. It is a great experience for them. When they do what they are supposed to be doing, it really adds to the meaning of the Mass. Mass could not be what it is without our servers.”

Ultimately, participating in the ministry helps the young servers discover more about their best, eternal friend – Jesus – as well as grow into the people that God has created them to be.

“When the servers are spending time on the altar, so close to the Body of Christ, they can’t help but get more involved in their faith,” Michael says. “They also get to know the priest better, and learn more about the Mass.”

And, amazingly, altar serving also helps them grow into the people God has created them to be, and form meaningful relationships with other young Catholics.

“Each year, the parish pays for a trip to a water park for our altar servers,” Michael says. “It really helps the servers build up friendships with each other. One year, there was a server who was so timid, she didn’t know if she even wanted to go on the trip. But she did go, and her mother went with her. She made some great friends on the trip, which was helpful because she was new in town. I could see her blossoming right before my eyes!”





# and Faith Through Server Ministry

The Altar Server Ministry has also proven to be a blessing, not just for the servers and the congregation, but also for Michael, who generously offers his time and talent to it.

“When I was in the seventh grade, I stopped attending Catholic school and started going to public school instead,” Michael says. “At that time, my parish priest asked me to start training our altar servers, and I did it for several years after that. From early on in my life, I believe that God has been calling me to train altar servers. It is part of my stewardship commitment, and I love doing it.”

Michael trains the altar servers, as well, offering training sessions periodically for two hours each day for three days at a time.

“It is important to realize that being close to Jesus and knowing him in the Eucharist through your service at the altar, enables you to open yourselves to others, to journey together, to set demanding goals and to find the strength to achieve them.”

– Pope Francis,  
*Address to Altar Servers*

*If you would like more information on how to serve Our Lord in the Eucharist at the altar through this beautiful ministry, please contact Michael McVeigh at 904-535-0522. Servers must be in fifth grade or above.*

## Eucharistic Ministers

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Training consists of a simple two-and-a-half-hour meeting with Cathy or Msgr. Brennan that goes over the theology behind the Eucharist and covers what the diocese expects of those who choose to serve. Some hands-on training also assures the practical application of the task – what to do and when – is fully addressed and understood. New Eucharist Ministers are provided with an instructional booklet – created by parishioner Louanne Hawkins – that can serve as a reference once the training is finished.

As current members of the ministry start to age, Cathy says she hopes young people will take a closer look at becoming a Eucharistic Minister and embracing how this simple gift can spread Jesus’ love to their parish community.

“Our arms are open for anybody to join the ministry,” she says. “You need to be over 16 and you need to have received Confirmation. We’re looking for the younger generation, those in their 20s, 30s and 40s.”



*Msgr. Brennan and a Eucharistic Minister work together to distribute the Host during Mass. Eucharistic Minister coordinator Cathy Damone says the ministry is one way parishioners can share their talents and love for Christ without a major time commitment.*

*Please contact Cathy Damone at 904-742-0596 or [cathydamone@yahoo.com](mailto:cathydamone@yahoo.com) to learn more about the ministry or to get involved.*



## The Blessings of the Catholic Mass

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally represented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.



Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces to fill us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.



## Lectoring Provides Unique Opportunity to Know Scripture

Imagine you're sitting in Mass, and it's time for the First Reading, but no one walks up to read. Suddenly, you realize the priest is motioning for you to get up and you find yourself walking, almost in a daze, up to the ambo, to proclaim God's Word.

Sounds a little bit like a bad dream, doesn't it? But for parishioner Glenn Palmer, it was real life. And far from being an unpleasant experience, it ended up introducing him to a ministry that is now his favorite way to serve.

"I remember the first time, I had just gone through lector training, I was sitting in church with my family and a lector didn't show," Glenn says, fondly recalling the memory. "The deacon saw me and pointed like, 'C'mon up here!' I got up and did the reading and from that moment on, I just loved doing it."

Glenn has now served as a lector for nearly 15 years and has served as the head of the lectors for the past eight years.

Glenn, who is originally from New York City, moved to Ponte Vedra in 2003 with his Texas-native wife, Shannon, and their three children. They immediately joined the parish and Glenn quickly found ways to become involved – first as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, and then as a lector not long after.

For Glenn, being involved in the parish, especially as a lector, has helped him to grow in his faith and relationship with God.

"I am a cradle Catholic, and when you grow up Catholic, you can kind of take it for granted," he says. "Now, when I'm up there reading, I'm focused. It's enhanced my understanding of what the Bible is about. It's probably made me a better parent, a better husband, a better person. I talk to God a lot more and I feel much more of a personal relationship.

"This is coming from a kid who grew up in New York," he adds with a smile. "I'm always in a rush, always looking to do things. I'd criticize people and get into arguments, but I've really changed a lot. As a lector, you can't help but absorb some Scripture into your life."



*One of our lectors at Our Lady Star of the Sea, Bill Kornmayer proclaiming the Word of God at Sunday Mass.*

Glenn is also grateful for how being a lector has helped him appreciate God's Word more.

"I think that being involved like that, you can't help but appreciate Scripture more," he says. "There are times when I'm reading, and something really applies and just hits home."

Serving as the lector at the Saturday morning Mass each week for the past nine years, Glenn has had the opportunity to become more connected in the parish, getting to know both the priests and other parishioners.

"It's been fun to meet all the different priests and personalities and get to know them," he says. "We have serious conversations and we have kidding conversations. Getting to know them on a personal level, they've been great for advice and they'll give me a different point of view, so that's something that's really helped my growth. I've also gotten to know some of the older crowd [at Saturday morning

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Mass] much more and they're really some cool people, so that's been really neat."

Glenn encourages others in the parish to get involved, whether as a lector, or in some other way.

"Go and talk to somebody else who is involved and ask them why they got involved and what they love about it," Glenn says. "If you're unsure, just give it a shot – if you don't like it or it's the wrong thing, then try something else. I think being involved is so important and it just makes you feel more a part of the parish."

*If you are interested in learning more about becoming a lector, please contact Glenn Palmer at [glennpalmer5@comcast.net](mailto:glennpalmer5@comcast.net).*

*"I am a cradle Catholic, and when you grow up Catholic, you can kind of take it for granted. Now, when I'm up there reading, I'm focused. It's enhanced my understanding of what the Bible is about. It's probably made me a better parent, a better husband, a better person. I talk to God a lot more and I feel much more of a personal relationship."*

*– Glenn Palmer*

### LITURGY SCHEDULE

*Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m. | Sunday - 7:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.*

*Daily (Monday to Saturday) - 8:30 a.m. | Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.*

*Sacrament of Reconciliation: Wednesdays from 6:00-6:45 p.m.*

*Saturdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m.*