

## **VARIOUS MINISTRIES IN THE MASS**

Every liturgy is celebrated by the entire church community. While the majority of those present participate as members of the assembly, there is a small group who serves the community by filling various ministerial roles.

Because of his ordination, the priest is given the power to offer the sacrifice of the Mass in the person of Christ. He joins the assembly to himself in order to offer the Mass through Christ to the Father. The deacon, though ordained, does not have the same sacred powers as the priest in a liturgical celebration. He does, however, have the responsibility to help both the bishop and the priest in the celebration of the divine mysteries, and has his own duties to perform during the Mass, particularly in association with the Gospel reading and the care of the chalice during Communion.

Lay ministers also play an important part in the celebration of a liturgy. The acolytes, or altar servers, assist the priest throughout the Mass by ensuring that the objects required are ready and available. Lectors proclaim the readings from Scripture (though not the Gospel), and it is in part through them that God speaks directly to His people. Finally, the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion ('extraordinary' because they are not the 'ordinary' minister of Communion, the priest) assist the priest and deacon in the distribution of Communion to the assembly. They will also, when necessary, take the Blessed Sacrament to those who are sick or homebound, and thus include in the liturgy those of the community who are prevented from attending.

Along with those ministries performed during a liturgy, there are many ministries in a parish community. Some are connected to the celebration of Mass, such as the hospitality ministers and the sacristan. Other ministries are tied to the life of the parish outside of the liturgy, such as catechism, youth ministry, those who work with the poor and needy, and more. In continuing the work of salvation - in liturgical celebrations and in the daily life of the community - there are many roles to be filled. It is fitting, then, that they should be performed by the many members of the church community, according to their talents and abilities.