

Dress to Serve

For all Lectors, Cantors, Psalmists, Eucharistic Ministers, Musicians

Liturgical ministries serve the liturgy AND the congregation, placing us “front and center”. It is important for all of us to dress modestly and appropriately. All Leaders, Ushers, Greeters, Extraordinary Ministers, Musicians, Cantors, and anyone speaking from the ambo or cantor stand are role models. Others look to us as examples of what is appropriate.

Clergy and Ministry Leaders are not the “liturgy police”, but serve the parish in gently helping to facilitate reverence during Mass. When we see a minister obviously not observing St. Mark’s dress guidelines we explain our concerns, encourage them to read these guidelines and adhere to them when serving on the altar.

The over-arching rule to observe is to not draw attention to yourself or distract clergy or congregation from the Liturgy as it unfolds. Following are some specific guidelines with examples of both acceptable and unacceptable dress for service on the altar:

- First preference is no blue jeans, but clean jeans in good condition (no holes, rips, fringed edges, tight, or extremely baggy worn below the hips) are acceptable. Docker-style slacks for men and women and capris for women are good choices.
- Cantor or psalmists may not wear jeans at all when serving on the altar.
- No tee-shirts. Button shirts, polo shirts for men and women, blouses for women are required. An exception for tee-shirts is if an entire group of Mass attendees wear them for a specific event or reason.
- No shorts, sweatpants, tank tops, tube tops or flip flops.
- Sandals or athletic shoes that are clean and in good condition are acceptable but must not be in neon colors or otherwise conspicuous.
- Women and girls: no overly tight-fitting dresses, blouses, skirts, pants; no exposure of cleavage, bare midriffs or backs. No miniskirts or any other items that draw undue attention to the minister’s body.
- Women may wear leggings when covered by a tunic or other top that reaches below the hips.
- Women do not wear mantillas, scarves, or head coverings of any type when serving on the altar. An exception for head coverings on women is if an entire group of Mass attendees wear them for a specific event or reason, such as the Red Hat Ladies.
- Noisy jewelry, glittery nail polish, novelty ties and anything else that draws undue attention to yourself is not acceptable.
- Observe good habits of personal hygiene including neatly trimmed and clean fingernails and hair.

A final thought: Clothes make a statement about who we are and what we value; they influence how we behave and feel. When we dress excessively casually, or are unclean, we seem to be saying “*nothing is really all that important.*” When we dress to draw attention to ourselves we seem to be saying “*nothing is more important than me.*”

Going to God’s house IS important, more important than asserting our individuality. Being ministered to by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is astounding.