

Throughout the month of August we have looked at various liturgical ministries, ushers, lectors, Eucharistic ministers and ministers of hospitality. We have presented information about what it takes to be a part of these ministries and some witness from people who serve as a part of these ministries. Hopefully this month has inspired you to either continue as part of a ministry or to become involved in a new ministry. Involvement in a ministry or a parish committee makes a great deal of difference in your parish participation.

My family taught me this lesson well. We belonged to the small parish of Sacred Heart in Union County. Once I made my first communion I was trained to be an altar server and I served regularly, really regularly, really really regularly. When the McBride family entered church the servers were there. We served almost every Sunday and any special celebrations. There were times that I did not want to go to church because I knew that I would have to serve and I simply did not want to serve. But not going was not an option and not serving was not an option. I would get to church dragging my feet but putting the robe on to serve and getting things set up. There were other times when I felt a true part of the community and was happy that I was able to serve. As these robes got shorter and shorter on me I begged my Mom and Dad to stop serving and one day quite to my surprise they agreed. But before the rejoicing could begin I was signed up to be a lector. A new ministry that morphed into Eucharistic ministry and ushering and yes still at times serving.

The McBride family did not simply attend mass we ministered at mass. This meant that the community expected our participation and we did not disappoint. I have often heard people complain that mass is boring or they see no need to go. One sure way of fighting this feeling is to become involved in a ministry or committee of the parish. The more that you are involved the more active you are the closer you come to the community and the more you want to be a part of the community life. It would be like going to the movie theatre, getting popcorn and sitting down in the lobby to eat the popcorn and never going in to see a movie. The popcorn is good but you are missing a large part of the experience if you do not get a seat in the theatre.

On Sunday, July 28 of this year I began a poem by John Shea entitled "The Prayer of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass". I would like to finish this poem by beginning with where we left off.

*The courage of the president  
of the liturgical assembly  
drained into the bolt holes  
of communion rail days.*

*The offertory gifts never made it.  
They were dropped by an elderly couple  
("We never like the new Mass anyway.")  
who collided with a small but speedy child  
whose high-heeled mother was in klicky-klack pursuit  
and who name was "Rodgercomeback."*

*The consecration was consistent. The priest lifted the host and said,  
"This is my blood."  
Instantly aware of his Eucharistic goof  
but also momentarily in the grip of a bizarre logic  
he changed the wine into Jesus' body.*

*Then with his whole mind, heart, and soul  
he genuflected  
—never to rise —  
to a mystery which masks itself  
as mistake  
and a power which perfects itself in weakness.*

I encourage you to consider being a part of this great and wonderful celebration. Take part in the variety of ministries and yes there will be mistakes and goofs but the miracle is that God perfects all in our mistakes and our Lord Jesus Christ makes himself present to us.

Fr. Larry McBride