

DRESS CODE for Liturgical Ministers

Sunday is the day we celebrate the day of resurrection. It is a day we remember, celebrate and believe. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. (#2177) The Eucharist is "The source and summit of the Christian life." (Lumen Gentium 11) It continues to remind us of the communal nature of the Mass. If it was a private prayer it could be done in the home, but it is a communion, a thanksgiving of the people of God.

Like with all things in the Church and in life, we should live not for ourselves but for others. Jesus tells us that if we lead someone else to sin, it would better for us to tie a boulder around our neck and throw ourselves into the ocean. We teach by example and this is particularly the case for those who choose to help us in the Liturgy as Liturgical Ministers. This lifestyle of being a Christian and leading others to Christ is one that is under constant attack in many ways in our culture.

Our Baptism confers on its recipient the grace of purification from all sins. But the baptized must continue to struggle against the sins of the flesh and disordered desires and passions. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, **modesty**, self-control and chastity." (Galatians 5: 22-23)

Modesty protects the intimate part of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity. Modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet (CC #2521, 2522).

A 11-year-old girl, Jacinta Marto, one of the little visionaries of Fatima, was taught some wisdom by the Blessed Mother. Here is what the Blessed Mother said with regard to styles of dress: "*Fashions will arise which will greatly offend God.*" I can't help but think that this is what is happening in our culture today. Women wear very tight clothing, very low necklines, skirts with hemlines or slits which do not cover below the knee, low-cut pants, etc. Our little visionary Jacinta stated, "those who keep the law of God should not follow fashions." Even our dress should lead others to virtue and not to sin. Exposing too much flesh and tight clothing is putting others in the occasion of sin and should be avoided. We must remember at all times, and especially in Church in the presence of others, that we teach by example and should ask if our dress is leading others to Christ or to lust and sin.

In the spirit of Christian modesty, I ask that you put yourselves in the shoes of a catechist. We represent the Catholic Church and as such need to present ourselves accordingly at all times, especially when we gather to worship. With these thoughts in mind we will be following these dress regulations in the Church and particularly when you are in a position of being a liturgical minister. I would encourage you to always keep in mind the message you are sending to others with the manner of your dress. What we do in church should be carried out in life.

Please look on the back of this sheet for our regulations concerning dress for all liturgical ministers, effectively immediately.

WOMEN (*ladies first, as always*)

Nice Skirt or dress (at least knee length), or dress slacks, with an appropriate dress blouse and dress shoes. No flip flops or 'noisy' shoes that cause distractions from the silence. No bright colored shoes like crocs that would call attention to the feet.

No shorts, T-shirts, halter tops or anything tight on the body. Shoulders should be covered and necklines cannot be revealing. The stomach or lower back should never be showing.

No jeans or slovenly worn pants.

MEN

Nice Slacks and colored shirt, tucked inside your pants. A belt and dress shoes also should be worn with dress socks. No sandals, flip flops, crocs or tennis shoes. No shorts, t-shirts or jeans. A tie would always be a nice thing and a good example.

We want to stress the importance of Sunday Mass and how it is indeed a time of celebration - a gift to God and the people of His Church. If you dress better for parties or to go out than you do to go to Church and receive God in His community and in His body and blood, you are telling us, by your outward appearance, what you find to be more important.

Thank you for your awareness and participation in our ministry.