

NEW YEAR THANKS, PRAISE AND INVITATION FOR SELF RENEWAL TO OUR EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS, LECTORS, ALTAR SERVERS & THEIR PARENTS:

Dear Altar Servers & their Parents, Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers,

Like priesthood, marriage and family life, if we are not careful, routine sets in and we forget we are handling sacred vessels, the precious Body and Blood of Christ, proclaiming God's Holy Word or serving at the altar of God...ministering to God's very holy people. I am very grateful to you and praise you for your dedication and fidelity over the years. Whether you are new or seasoned, I ask you to please take the beginning of a New Year as a time to renew yourselves by remembering what we do together at the Altar can encourage joyful reverence or unintentionally encourage the faithful to forget that gathering on Sunday, the Vigil or each day, for the WORD and SACRAMENT, is an extraordinary, holy, happy event that is special. If we are half-heartedly in our service, then for ourselves and those we serve what ought to be extraordinary...can so easily become extraordinarily ORDINARY! If we, especially priests and all at the altar: servers, Lectors and Eucharistic ministers merely show up, "do our thing" without preparation, thought or reflection to what it going on, those served are poorly served.

This is, I sense, the intent of the Penitential Rite at the beginning of all Masses: a time to wake up, focus, remember what we are there for and do our level best to both listen with open minds and hearts and then come to the table to eat and drink the sacred Body and Blood of the Lord- all uniting us to the Lord and one another. That is what Holy Communion is supposed to mean.

When priests and parents lose the center, forgetting the ideal and what it is all about then the faithful and the family/children unintentionally get the short end of the stick. For priests, ministers at the altar (Lectors/Eucharistic ministers and servers), this can and does happen when we fail to show for our commitment, neglect to find someone to cover for us, are chronically late, or chronically unprepared to proclaim the word, i.e...resulting in just reading the word and NOT proclaiming it, consequently distracted servers, distract and discourage those served. At the beginning of 2013, I place myself first in recommitting myself to renew my service and if there is room and/or the need for you to join me in renewal of commitment please be welcomed and encourage to join me.

Your service at the altar is needed, appreciated and deserving of praise. Thank you for your openness to my invitation.

Father Tom