

GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY:

SS. John and Paul Parish

INTRODUCTION:

The pastor received a letter marked, "Please give to Harry the Usher." It was handed over to Harry, and this is what it said:

"Dear Harry. I'm sorry I don't know your last name, but then, you don't know mine. I'm Gert, Gert at the ten o'clock Mass every Sunday. I'm writing to ask you a favor. I don't know the priests too well, but somehow feel close to you. I don't know how you got to know my first name, but every Sunday morning you smile and greet me by name, and we exchange a few words: how bad the weather is, how much you like my hat, and how I am late on a particular Sunday. I just wanted to say thank you for taking the time to remember an old woman, for the smiles, for your consideration, for your thoughtfulness.

"Now for the favor. I am dying, Harry. My husband has been dead for sixteen years, and the kids are scattered. It is very important to me that when they bring me to church for the last time, you will be there to say, 'Hello, Gert. Good to see you.' If you are there, Harry, I will feel that your warm hospitality will be duplicated in my new home in heaven. With love and gratitude, Gert."

As you can see, the Ministry of Ushers and Greeters is an important one here at SS. John and Paul Parish. Your words and gestures can make a big difference in those attending Mass.

The purpose of these notes is to provide some general observations and principals on these very important liturgical ministries of the Church. As you can tell, the Ministry of Ushers and Greeters are closely connected.

Thank you so much for your ministry in service to our Parish. You have been called and chosen not to just say "hello" or "take up the collection". Your primary role is to provide assistance to all members of the congregation and help them to become full and active participants in the liturgy.

MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY:

Ushers and Greeters are called to be Ministers of Hospitality. They are entrusted with promoting a sense of welcoming and belonging to all the faithful assembled for worship. At most times, you will be the first people they see when they come to worship here at SS. John and Paul. Because of this, you have a special part in the liturgy.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. The Ministry of Hospitality is truly a service to the Church and should be treated seriously and with great dignity. Therefore, Ministers of Hospitality should have an understanding of the Liturgy in order to be effective in providing the faithful with the proper environment.
2. In addition, the following attributes will assist the ministers of seeking Jesus' face in the face of each and every person who comes into the church: patience, reverence, sensitivity, compassion, understanding, gentleness, embracing a sense of the family gathered as the Body of Christ.
3. Your participation in the Ministry of Hospitality should be a direct reflection of your own prayer life which is nurtured by the Word of God and reception of Holy Eucharist thereby imbuing within you a spirit of dignity and respect.

USHERS:

In general, ushers carry the responsibility for the following:

1. Seating those assembled for Liturgy and especially taking special efforts to seat the faithful during the natural breaks in the Mass.
2. Attending to the needs of the disabled through such things as holding doors open, or locating non sloped areas places for wheelchairs and walkers.
3. Making sure that the gifts of bread and wine are in their proper places before Mass and asking members of the assembly to bring forth the gifts at the Offertory
4. Checking the worship space to make certain that it free from clutter
5. Assisting in the Rite of Preparation:
 - circulating the collection baskets. **We will start to pass the baskets here at SS. John and Paul. At St. Paul Church start the baskets at the front on both side sections and both middle sections. At St. John Church, start the baskets at the front and at the middle on both side sections and both middle sections. Please make sure the baskets get passed from pew to pew.**
 - assisting in the Offertory Procession if needed. **Please do your very best to find a family to help with the Offertory Procession. At the 9:30 and 11 AM Masses, if the children who have been dismissed for the Children's Liturgy of the Word are back in Church, they will be the gift bearers.**

6. Assisting the handicapped in receiving Holy Communion as well as facilitating the Communion procession. However it is not necessary to stand at each row while that row goes to Communion, which has the appearance of “keeping track” of who goes and who does not receive Holy Communion

7. Offering the parish bulletin to the faithful as they exit the church

A Couple More Points:

- Be reliable. Each Minister is responsible for serving when scheduled. Please be courteous: if you cannot serve when assigned, please arrange for a substitute
- Dress "UP" neatly and conservatively. (Flip-Flops, tennis shoes, sun dresses, tank tops, T-shirts, low-cut tops, shorts, and blue jeans are inappropriate for Sunday Mass.)
- PARTICIPATE in the liturgy by truly entering into a spirit of prayer. Sing and respond. This is not the time to be talking among yourselves. You are called upon to set a good example.
- Eucharistic Ministers are requested to be in Church ten minutes before Mass begins and to participate fully in the Liturgy. It is expected that those who serve as usher will arrive a **MINIMUM OF 15 MINUTES BEFORE MASS** and greeters will arrive a **MINIMUM OF 30 MINUTES BEFORE MASS**. The opportunity to make the appropriate first impression on worshippers is missed if the people you are there to greet and assist arrive before you do. If you are not there until after Mass begins, you cannot properly do your job. Additionally, part of the role of the usher is to be sure that everything in church is in order, i.e. doors are unlocked, lights are on, the vestibule is clean, bulletin and envelope racks are properly filled, etc. Ushers must be available to help any person who may need assistance to a seat, directions to the restrooms, or other information.
- The last impression may be as lasting as a first impression. That is why it is important that the ushers and greeters are stationed at each of the exits at the conclusion of Mass to hand out bulletins and express a kind word of parting. The ushers may also be needed to provide assistance to those members of the community who need help.
- When possible, the ushers and greeters should check to see that the church is returned as much as possible to a state of readiness for the next service. The doors between the vestibule and church should be closed and the outside doors should be closed unless the weather dictates otherwise. The pews should be checked for forgotten articles of clothing, books, toys, etc. If time allows, missalettes should be returned to the holders and discarded bulletins and the like removed from the pews.

GREETERS:

In general, greeters carry the responsibility for the following:

1. Opening doors to make sure the entrance into the church is welcoming to all
2. Giving full attention to the gathering assembly by offering a “Good Morning”. Keep in mind that a handshake or appropriate touch can speak volumes
3. Smile, which not only magnifies your true inner sincerity and sensitivity, but is an international sign of welcome to all the faithful
4. Seek the face of Jesus in everyone
5. If you can help the Ushers in any way, please do so

ONE LAST NOTE:

At the Last Supper Jesus Himself provided the example of hospitality as service when he washed the feet of the Apostles. When you offer your service as an usher and/or greeter, you are responding to Christ's example. View your ministry as an act of prayer, an attempt to witness to the living Christ. In so doing you will begin to see the face of Christ in the faces of those whom you serve.