

GUIDELINES FOR USHER MINISTERS
ST. MARY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH
Revised 01/18/2012 by Fr Jeremy Gries

I. Overview

These guidelines are intended to assist our Ushers as servants to our faith community. Our objective is to define the procedures for our ushers to use that will offer uniformity and order for our faith community. These guidelines reflect current documents and policies of the Archdiocese and Church Universal pertaining to accepted practices of the Liturgy.

Serving as an Usher is an often underappreciated ministry to the Church community. Prayerful, welcoming, and attentive ushers are a valuable asset. They help people gather and celebrate for the Holy Mass. Embrace your duties, and receive each person as Christ.

II. Scheduling

Schedules are prepared each month and are sent by e-mail or mailed to your home. Each minister is scheduled according to the information sheet on file with the parish. After this training, you can expect to begin your rotation as an Usher the next month.

When you receive the schedule, if you foresee a conflict, it is **each minister's responsibility to find a substitute** for your scheduled time.

III. Duties for Mass

A. General Notes

- 1) Arrive 15 minutes before the start of Mass when you are scheduled to usher.
- 2) When necessary, find substitute ministers. Substitutions should be completed 10 minutes before the start of Mass.
- 3) Observe quiet reverence while talking to people.
- 4) Assist parishioners when needed.
- 5) Be alert to emergencies.

B. Set-Up

- 1) Make sure the Collection Baskets are out in the back of Church. At the 5:30p Mass, they may be located in the Servers' Sacristy where they are stored during the week. Please do not place the baskets on top of the radiators. It harms the baskets.
- 2) Make sure there are Bulletins at each of the three doors.
- 3) Greet all people, young and old, new or familiar, as they enter. Consider yourself the "Welcome Wagon"! If the person looks new to you, they probably are. Welcome them to the parish.
- 4) Ask a family or group of persons to take up the Offertory (Bread, Wine, Collection)
 - a) Instruct family or group to come to back of church when Petitions / Prayers of the Faithful begin.
 - b) Instruct them to carry items to front, hand them to the priest, and then once all are finished, and bow.

IV. Your Role During Mass

A.Assisting with Seating

- 1) Once Mass has started please seat parishioners upon entrance into the sanctuary.
- 2) Lead people down the side aisles to a pew with vacant seats.
- 3) You may need to ask / encourage people in the pews to move in toward the middle of the pew if Mass is particularly full.
- 4) Seat latecomers toward the back of church to avoid distracting others, if possible. Do not allow latecomers to take seats while the Scriptures are being proclaimed or the homily is being preached. Wait until an appropriate break or change in posture.
- 5) Do not allow parishioners to rest / lean on the walls located at the back of the church. Rather, help and encourage them to locate a seat.

B.Collection

- 1) At Petitions or Prayers of the Faithful, get collection baskets.
- 2) Once Petitions or Prayers of the Faithful are completed and people sit, ushers walk forward down center aisle, baskets in hand, bow to altar, and then each distributes to one side or the other.
- 3) Start one basket down the inside pews (off center aisle), one basket down the outside pews (off side aisle), and then walk the third basket down the outside 2-seater pews.
- 4) Keep a visual on each of the baskets as they are being passed. Some may be tempted to help themselves to its contents!
- 5) Gather all the contents of the baskets into one basket to be sent up with the collection.
- 6) Give the basket with the gathered contents, the bread, and the wine to the family that will bring the gifts up.
- 7) Send the gifts up when the priest and servers start down to the foot of the steps.

C.Distribution of Communion

- 1) Move forward when Communion Hymn begins to dismiss persons from the pews.
- 2) Guide disabled persons to the front of the church where communion can be brought to them.

v. RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER MASS

1. Help distribute Bulletins.
2. Be available to assist anyone with difficulties as they leave the church.
3. Tidy up the church for the next Mass.

VI. DRESS CODE

In preparing for Mass, remember that appearance is important. Please dress in “business casual” or better. Dress conservatively and professionally for the liturgical service at which you will serve as usher. Avoid distracting and/or inappropriate apparel, such as halter/tank tops, mini-skirts, tight

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clothing, flashy jewelry and shirts and/or pants with large graphic designs/words, jeans, flip-flops and sports jerseys. Keep in mind that each Mass is attended by a cross-section of our parish and choose apparel that is simple, respectful and appropriate for the community whom you are to serve. If you are not dressed appropriately, you should not serve as an usher at that Mass. Ushering people at the Mass is a dignified duty, and the Usher should dress accordingly.