



MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY USHERS & GREETERS



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Minister of Hospitality is used broadly to include those men and women who serve their parishes in the liturgical ministries of *Usher* or *Greeter*. The St. James Parish Community is grateful for your generosity and commitment to be a Minister of Hospitality (referred to as Greeters and Ushers) at our parish.

What you do is not simply a job, but a gift of service. You have the opportunity to enhance your own and other's experience of the Liturgy through your gracious contributions each week. As a Minister of Hospitality, you will contribute a welcome at Mass here for all who attend Mass, whether they are long-standing parish members, or on a business trip, or visitors.

General Information

Hospitality is at the basis of this ministry. The Minister of Hospitality is often the first person whom worshippers meet when they arrive at the Church. The minister's smile reflects the sincerity of the welcome from the community and people experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world in the church. The first task of the parish community is to reach out to all people in Christian love and service not as an obligation but because we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. This calling to hospitality is rooted in our baptism through which we become members of one body, one family in Christ. By means of our initiation into the Church and strengthened by grace, God empowers each person with the resources for the ministry of hospitality. In their welcome and Christ-like attitude, Ministers of Hospitality ensure that the faithful see and experience the love of Christ.

The Minister of Hospitality is equipped for this ministry by God's own friendliness. This gift makes this ministry effective and enables the minister to build up the Body of Christ, in their welcome and Christ-like attitude. Ministers of Hospitality ensure that the faithful see and experience the love of Christ as they enter into the Church and to the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Ministry of Hospitality is crucial because it is so visible in the Church. Certainly the attitude, conduct and even the appearance of the Minister of Hospitality directly affects either positively or negatively the experience of the faithful at Mass.

Requirements

Those who desire to serve as Minister of Hospitality should be active and faithful members of the Church. Respect for others, discretion and appropriate decorum are the hallmarks of a Minister of Hospitality. Above all, ministers should be noted for their care to the assembly. These qualities are found in all mature Christians – no matter what age.

Furthermore, the minister should be comfortable meeting and greeting others. They must always extend a sense of welcome to others and make them feel at home. Such qualities are a blessing, especially to the stranger in our midst.

Expectations

Always attentive to the needs of the faithful, they should sit in those places that would enable them to best exercise their ministerial role, i.e., near the doors, throughout the church, etc.

Ministers of Hospitality are part of the worshipping community. As such, they are to participate fully in the singing, responding, and pray along with the liturgy. At times, however, the special duties of the minister may limit his or her ability to participate. Yet, every effort should be made by the Ministers of Hospitality to be models of participation in the worship of God.

- Dress in the “Sunday Best” type of clothing and apparel.
- Join in the liturgy as part of the worshipping assembly!
- During the Sign of Peace, be especially alert to the presence of newcomers or visitors and extend a greeting to them.
- Be conscious of those with a physical disability or who cannot join the Communion procession. In an inconspicuous way, bring their location to the attention of a minister of Communion.
- Be prepared for emergencies: know the position of the fire extinguisher; locations of fire exits; how and where to activate emergency lighting, a telephone to contact 911 in a medical emergency, etc.
- If you will not be at your usual Mass, please let the head usher know the week before so they can find someone else to replace you.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES*Greeters*

- Arrive at least 20 minutes before the Mass starts.
- Ensure you are easily identifiable (e.g. by name tag, etc); be located at the entrance to the naïve and ready to greet.
- Greet and welcome the faithful as they gather for worship. Greeters should be at each of the entrances of the church. They should avoid congregating in only one area of the church, as well as speaking with their fellow ministers to the exclusion of those who are gathering for the liturgy.
- Introduce new parishioners or visitors to one or two familiar members.

Ushers:

- Arrive at least 20 minutes before the Mass starts.
- Ensure you are easily identifiable (e.g. by name tag, etc).
- Escort latecomers to any available (open) pew space(s).
- If the readings have begun, ask latecomers to wait at the back of the church until after the reading is read and then assist them to find seats.

- If there is a children's Liturgy of the Word, assist by opening doors and helping children who might be unsure of the venue or how to return to their families.
- During the Prayers of the Faithful, the ushers should unobtrusively position themselves in the back of the Church, ready to distribute the collection baskets. After the Closing Prayer, the Minister should then assume their designated places. Each minister should have the appropriate number of wicker baskets in hand and proceed down the center and side aisles immediately.
- At the foot of the Altar, the ushers should reverently bow their heads, and then give one basket to the first person in each front pew. The ushers should then remain at the outer edges of pews and continue this process of circulating the collection baskets until completed.
- After the collection is completed, the Ministers should quickly consolidate the money into one or two plastic bags. The slip on top of the bag needs the name of the church, date and two signatures. Remove this slip and put it with the money in the bag and seal it. Put the bag(s) into the basket to bring to the altar.
- Assist in forming the procession for the presentation of the gifts at the back of the church near the baptismal font. Insure the group of gift bearers is lead to the sanctuary steps by cross bearer.
- At Communion, the ushers should again position themselves side-by-side in the back of church in the center and side aisle. It is important to note the appropriate timing and maintain a proper pace as they approach the altar.
- When the priest turns to the first Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and presents the wine to him/her, the ushers should proceed down the center and side aisles, bow their heads in unison toward the altar, and position themselves next to the edge of the first pew. Parishioners in the front pews are then invited to communion as soon as it is obvious that the priest and Extra Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion are about to come around the altar to distribute communion to the assembly.
- Ushers are asked to observe that those who have received the Precious Body that they have consumed Him before returning to their pews.
- Proceed one pew at a time towards the back of the church inviting parishioners in each pew to communion. Remember to invite parishioners sitting along the back wall to communion.
- Ushers must be alert to identify those parishioners who, due to medical or other reason(s) are unable to come forward to receive communion. In such instances, the usher will be responsible for identifying the parishioner(s) to a communion minister to insure they receive communion.
- The ministers of hospitality should be the last in line to receive Communion.
- Hand out bulletins as people leave and say a word of appropriate farewell.

- Invite people to stay for tea/coffee and/or donuts, when appropriate and guide them to the area.

Scriptural Relevance

Hospitality was at the heart of the Jewish scriptures and was highly valued by Jesus. Jesus told stories of feasts and banquets, was very relaxed in the company of public sinners, and experienced the hospitality of many including Martha and Mary, celebrated Passover with his friends, and rescued a newly married couple from poor hospitality.

- *Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me; and those who welcome me, welcome the one who sent me (Matthew 10:40).*
- *For I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25: 31, 34, 35).*
- *The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45).*
- *In the parable of the great feast, Jesus invites the poor, crippled, blind and lame to share in the banquet (Luke 14:14-22).*
- *Love one another with mutual affection. Anticipate one another in showing respect (Romans 12:10).*
- *Do not neglect to show hospitality, for by that means some have entertained angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2).*

Some Theological Considerations

- Hospitality plays a vital role in creating a sense of community for worship. A person who feels welcomed and valued is more likely to enter wholeheartedly into the celebration of the liturgy and to return as a member of the parish community. A friendly and welcoming Minister of Hospitality can make God's love apparent to people as they arrive.
- Christ is present in a four-fold way in the Eucharist:
 - (1) In the meal where he gives us his body and blood;
 - (2) In the proclaimed Word of God;
 - (3) In the priest as presider; and
 - (4) In the assembled persons at the ceremony.
- When the people gather on Sundays for the Mass, it is not as a group of people praying individually, but rather as a group involved as a community of worshippers. The faithful pray together. It is their prayer. Hospitality is the first ministry of those gathering to celebrate communal prayer.
- Greeters take the time and effort to be attentive to those who are gathering by acknowledging their presence, speaking to them, introducing people to one another. This personal contact helps each person, especially newcomers or visitors, feel welcome.
- The essence of hospitality is the quality of "being present." The invitation to relationship can transform a group of individuals into a dynamic community.

- Everything the people do in a parish (e.g. every gathering that occurs) affects the formation, growth or decline of the community. The faithful form one another in the ways they treat one another as members of the People of God. New growth happens new things are born in a parish where a hospitality ministry, that treats people as guests at family tables, is nurtured.
- Although all of the assembled are responsible for hospitality, Ministers of Hospitality are called to set an example for the assembly.
- The model for an understanding of the liturgical space is not that of a theatre or public hall, but closer to that of a home; a place characterized by warmth, friendship and hospitality; a place where all are equal before God; a place where dialogue and interaction are encouraged.
- Though Christ is the host of the liturgy, the Ministry of Hospitality's role is that of Christ's hands and feet, the living Body of Christ, someone whose presence, conversation and actions speak a genuine desire that all, who come to the liturgical event, enjoy their time together.

TRAINING AND INSTALLATION

Parishes have found that it is desirable to commission ministers of hospitality for a specified period of time. This allows the ministers to evaluate their service and determine if they wish to continue to participate in this ministry or perhaps change to another ministry at the end of their term. As with all liturgical ministries, it is best for the individual and parish if a person serves in only one ministry at any given time.

Parishes develop periodic training sessions to assist and reacquaint ministers of hospitality with all aspects of their service. Having appropriate knowledge and training will help ministers to function effectively and bring confidence and joy to their experience. It is most appropriate that ministers of hospitality be commissioned for their role in accord with the rite found in the Book of Blessings, chapter 62, an "Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians and Ushers."