**GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY: USHERS**

Thank you so much for your ministry in service to our Parish. You have been called and chosen not to just say “hello”. 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.

When the people gather for the celebration of Mass, it is not as individuals but, rather, as a community of believers. Hospitality helps bring together those gathering to pray together.

Hospitality creates a sense of community necessary for worship. A person who feels welcomed and valued is more likely to enter wholeheartedly into the celebration of the Mass and to return as a member of the parish community. A friendly and welcoming greeter makes God’s love apparent to people as they arrive.

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

**THOSE WHO MAY SERVE IN THIS MINISTRY:** A confirmed adult willing to assist as needed throughout the celebration of Mass can serve as an Usher. You must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic church.

*The lay Christian faithful called to give assistance at liturgical celebrations should be well instructed and must be those whose Christian life, morals, and fidelity to the Church’s Magisterium recommend them. It is fitting that such a one should have received a liturgical formation in accordance with his or her age , condition, state of life, and religious culture. No one should be selected whose designation could cause consternation for the faithful. (Redemptionis Sacramentum 46)*

**COMMITMENT:** Ushers are asked to attend Mass when scheduled. And, as mentioned, you must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic church.

**SCHEDULE:** The monthly schedules are mailed to your home and copies are located on the bulletin board in the narthex The upcoming week’s schedule is found in the bulletin as a gentle reminder. If unable to serve in this ministry when scheduled, it is the Usher’s responsibility to call someone else listed in the schedule who serves in that ministry and at that Mass time. If you know ahead of time that you will not be available to serve, contact Kim Garrow in the office **before** the 20th of the month. It is best to send her an email, text, or note as keeping track of all verbal communication from so many people is quite difficult. Please be aware that no one is perfect and sometimes you may mistakenly be put on the schedule. If you are listed on the schedule then you are expected to arrive and serve 15 minutes before Mass begins or find a substitute. If you are unable to find a substitute, please inform the sacristan. If you are the substitute serving, please inform the sacristan.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Ushers and Greeters are called to be Ministers of Hospitality and they are closely connected. 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 St Peter Parish. Because of this, you have a special part in the liturgy.

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.

* **You are required to watch the DVD located in the office that contains the catechism of the liturgy.**

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.

**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.
* It is expected that those who serve as Usher will arrive a **MINIMUM OF 15 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 greeter and usher is to be sure that everything in church is in order,
  + The vestibule is clean
  + Bulletin racks are properly filled and neat
* Ushers and greeters must be available to help any person who may need assistance to a seat (ushers), directions to the restrooms (both), or Holy Communion brought to them (ushers)
* 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 the exit at the conclusion of Mass to hand out bulletins (ushers) and express a kind word of parting (both usher and greeter).
* It is also important to know what is offered at St Peter so you may offer invitations to attend any activities after Mass (Coffee and rolls, breakfast, meetings, etc) or during the week (Weekday Mass, Adoration & Benediction, Holy Days of Obligation, Missions, First Friday breakfast, etc)
* 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 pews should be checked for forgotten articles of clothing, books, toys, etc.
  + Missalettes and hymnals should be returned to the holders and discarded bulletins and the like removed from the pews.
    - without disturbing those still praying.

**IN GENERAL, USHERS CARRY THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

* + Keep your eyes on those entering the church as well as those who are already seated. Be courteous and friendly at all times.
  + Ask those who need special assistance (wheelchair, walker, cane, etc.) where they would like to be seated and if they need Holy Communion brought to them.
  + Lead people down the aisle to a row with vacant seats, especially after seating gets sparse.
  + Seat latecomers toward the back or escort them down the side aisles if possible to avoid distracting others.
    - It is also better to seat late-comers when the congregation is standing.
    - Taking special efforts to seat the faithful during the natural breaks in the Mass.
      * Times inappropriate re-entrance for Mass:
        + Readings
        + Consecration
        + Kindly and gently please ask anyone trying to re-enter during those times to wait until an appropriate break then lead them back to their seats.
  + Try to anticipate people's needs and questions.
    - For example, if a person seems to be looking for something ask, “May I help you?"
      * Offer directions to the drinking fountain to the person who can't stop coughing.
      * Or offer help to a parent pushing a stroller or whose hands are full, taking out a disruptive child.
      * Be alert for anyone in need of help.
      * Pay attention to small children that use the restroom on their own so they are not leaving the building.
  + Make a mental note of any doctors or nurses who are in the congregation in case an emergency arises.
    - Be aware of where the First-Aid is in the building.
  + Be an active, participating member of the assembly during the liturgy, one who sings, prays, and listens.
  + Double checking to make sure that the gifts of bread and wine are in their proper places before Mass
  + Checking the worship space to make certain that it free from clutter
  + Assisting in the Rite of Preparation: circulating the collection baskets.
    - At St. Peter Parish we start the baskets at the front on both side sections and both middle sections and up in the balcony.
    - Please make sure the baskets get passed from pew to pew.
    - Take up the collection discreetly, not taking any note of who puts in what.
    - Take up the collection using small baskets, then empty into large one.
  + Arrange for Gift Bearers:
    - Asking members of the assembly to bring forth the gifts at the Offertory.
      * Check for family members of anyone who the Mass is being said for.
        + Name found in the bulletin.
      * If none are there, choose a family from the congregation before Mass begins
        + Make a note of people who are celebrating a special occasion: a birthday, an anniversary, or just a "happy day."
        + Gift Bearers actively participate in the celebration of the Mass by presenting the gifts of Bread and Wine at the altar and require no special skill or permanent ministerial duty, and yet it is a beautiful and significant part of the Mass performed by lay people.
      * If an adult server is present, he will come to meet and lead the Offertory Procession to the Altar, followed by the Usher, carrying the Basket of Gifts
      * If an adult server i is not present at Mass, then an Usher will lead the Offertory Procession to the Altar, carrying the Basket of Gifts
        + Wait until priest/deacon and servers are standing in front of the altar before beginning the procession.
        + Slowly lead the Gift Bearers
        + They follow walking side-by-side
        + Upon reaching the Altar - Hand the Presider the Basket and step aside
        + Depending on the Gift Bearers, some instructions may be necessary

The Presider will receive the wine and water first

That person then steps aside

Next the Presider will receive the bread

Presider will give a slight nod/bow

Together the Gift Bearers and Usher give a full bow

And return to their seats

Note: There is no Rite for the Presentation of the Gifts so instructions from the Presider may change

* + Facilitate the Communion procession.
    - Do this as a measure of hospitality rather than the appearance of “keeping track” of who goes and who does not receive Holy Communion.
  + Assist the handicapped in receiving Holy Communion
    - As you receive Holy Communion let the Communion minister near the Presider know if there are people in the back of the church to receive Holy Communion.
  + Offer the parish bulletin to the faithful as they exit the church.
    - After Mass, as needed, direct people to the parish hall for coffee or to the appropriate areas for receptions, sign-up sheets, and other parish business.
  + Seek the face of Jesus in everyone.
    - Jesus said to Simon the Pharisee: "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love." *(Luke 7: 44-47)*
    - In concrete terms, being hospitable means learning people's names and professions, taking care of their simplest needs, and thinking well of them, no matter from where or how they come. Yes, it means opening the door, but it also assumes you know what to do once the guest comes inside.
    - Hospitality meant something to Jesus. It was more than common custom. Hospitality showed respect for the visitor. It demonstrated the humility of the host. It avoided the temptation to sneer at the less fortunate or the less moral.
    - The church is our spiritual home. Welcome and care for everyone just as Jesus expected: nothing more than any other guest would. He expected water to wash his dusty feet, a kindly kiss of welcome, and a little perfume to spice up the visit. Anyone should have done this. Most people did. But Simon didn't. To make matters worse, Simon was a Pharisee. He may have been an expert in God's law, but he was failing at simple human courtesy.
    - Remember that you represent the parish and are most likely the first and last parishioner many will see on a given Sunday. Greet them by: Christ in you and in them.
  + If you can help the Greeters in any way, please do so: as both ministries are closely related.

**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.

**A PRAYER FOR MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY:**

Lord Jesus, You welcomed all who came into Your Presence. May I reflect that same Spirit through this ministry of hospitality. May Your Light shine in my heart this day. Remove from me anything that would stand in the way of radiating Your Presence. As people enter this Church to worship and praise You, may they hear Your Voice in my words and see Your Love in my actions. May my "welcome" reflect our joy at their presence and my "good-bye" encourage them to return soon. I thank You for the opportunity to serve You and ask Your Blessing upon all my efforts through our God who is the Giver of all gifts. Amen.