

Being a Minister of Hospitality

– a Greeter/Usher –



**The Church of the Holy Spirit
The Church of Saint Anthony
The Church of Saint John Cantius**

*Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God.
(Rom 15:7)*

WHY IS THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY IMPORTANT?

- A vital parish community welcomes new community members along with the familiar faces. The hospitality ministry is one of reaching out in dedicated service with the welcoming spirit of genuine inclusion to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- People experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world through the ministry of the church. And the first task of the parish community is to reach out to all people in Christian love and service. Christian hospitality draws people together, opens them to participation, and sets the tone for the liturgy.
- Through our calling as baptized Christians, we are gifted by the Holy Spirit and asked to use our talents and our gifts for the benefit of others. Providing the ministry of hospitality is crucial because it is so visible in the Church.
- We know that 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.
- The minister of hospitality - greeters and ushers - is a relatively new role for Catholics. Yes, we have had the generous service of ushers, but sometimes without the acknowledgement that our primary function was to make all in God's House feel welcome.
- Conscious of this vital ministry and its significance for the faithful, our parishes have asked people to step forward to provide a sense of welcome and hospitality. And we thank you for doing so!

WHAT DOES A MINISTER OF HOSPITALITY LOOK LIKE?

- They are active and faithful members of the Church.
- They are of godly character and reputation.
- They have respect for others, are discrete, and care deeply for those attending Mass.
- They are comfortable meeting and greeting others.
- They express joy. They cultivate a sense of humor in the face of difficulty. They do not show irritation and have a nonjudgmental attitude to those who may arrive late, etc.
- They are dependable. If unable to serve as scheduled, they find a substitute.
- They always extend a sense of welcome to others and make them feel at home.
- They arrive early – usually about 15 minutes – and are prepared to stay late.
- They represent the diversity of the parish. They are young and old, male and female, and represent the cultures and race of the parish.
- They dress appropriately.
- They are mindful that they are there to assist those who are preparing to worship God by creating a quiet and reverent atmosphere within the church.
- They also understand that the celebration of the Eucharist is a communal activity and not a private one. Greeting people at the door is a start. It alerts them to the fact that we are going to do something with others. It prepares them for the Gathering Rite.
- They remain open to new ideas and keep looking for ways to perform their ministry more graciously and effectively. They are open to improving their skills and make every effort to attend whatever liturgical training provided by the parish. Having appropriate knowledge and training helps ministers to function effectively and brings confidence and joy to their experience.

YOU ARE A VITAL PART OF OUR MISSION AS A PARISH BECAUSE YOU:

- Welcome those new to our community. We may have only one opportunity to do this.
- Continue to welcome existing parishioners. We must be aware that each and every day we lose Catholics to other church communities because they do not feel welcome in our communities.
- Are a model of service to others. Your efforts to assist another may stimulate that person to consider to also be of assistance; maybe in the parish, in the community, or in their homes.
- Help those worshipping with us to understand that hospitality are the pillars of our stewardship and faith formation efforts. You are telling them what this parish is like. You help determine if they want to get more involved in this parish.

- Continue to grow in your own faith life as a loving disciple, with increased stewardship, hospitality, and communication skills.
- Are getting the experience to possibly take on more parish leadership. We pray that you are open to accepting additional responsibility and involvement in other areas of parish life.

THINGS TO BE DONE PRIOR TO THE LITURGY:

- Become knowledgeable of what other events will be associated with this liturgy – Baptisms, anniversaries, Children’s Liturgy, etc.
- Greet and welcome the faithful as they gather for worship. Don’t forget to greet the children and youth too. Ministers of hospitality 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.
- Make your first word a word of welcome. Keep on the lookout for new members of the parish, for visitors, strangers, and all those that need special attention.
- Attend to newcomers. Introduce yourself and welcome them to the parish. Offer newcomers directions to the drinking fountains or the restrooms. Introduce newcomers to parish staff or parish regulars to help them get acquainted. If no parish staff is available, offer to take the names and contact information of newcomers wishing to register in the parish and forward this information to the parish office on Monday.
- Ask for gift-bearers –also known as Ministers of Hospitality - to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine. You may seek to include those that are being recognized at this Mass – such as those celebrating a baptism or anniversary, etc. Ask the gift-bearers to bow after they complete their task.
- Assist with the seating of the assembly before the liturgy begins. Do all that is needed to ensure everyone has a seat by fully utilizing the pews. You may need to encourage people to sit closer together and towards the middle of the pew.

THINGS TO REMEMBER AS A MINISTER OF HOSPITALITY:

- Ministers of hospitality are part of the worshipping community. As such, they are seated within the assembly. 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.
- You are to make an attempt to model full participation at the Eucharist – sing, respond and pray. At times, however, the special duties of the minister may limit your ability to participate.

DURING THE LITURGY, MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY ASSIST IN -

- The seating of latecomers with as much haste and as little disturbance as possible, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer or at the conclusion of the First Reading or Responsorial Psalm.

- The collection of the offerings of the people. Both the faithful and the offerings are to be treated with utmost dignity and reverence. The faithful should be given adequate time to deposit their gifts during the collection.
- Assist those who will be taking up the gifts.
- Directing the communion procession in an orderly manner, ensuring all are able to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.
- Being aware of those needing help.
- Providing information of the location of first aid supplies and the AED (automatic external defibrillator) to those that may need to use these supplies and medical equipment.
- Maintaining safety and security – beware of children moving outside of the worship space and away from their parents.
- Open the church doors for the worshipping community's departure only after the recessional has actually begun.

BUT, A GREETER/USHER'S WORK IS NOT DONE WITH THE DISMISSAL

- Ministers of hospitality should distribute the parish bulletins and any other pertinent materials at the conclusion of the liturgy.
- They should also be available to assist those with special needs.
- They assist in preparing the worship space for the next liturgy, making sure it is well organized and inviting.
- Ministers of Hospitality may also be asked to assist in securing the collections.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

The health, safety and welfare of all worshipping with us is of the utmost concern. The guidelines provided below should be followed in the event of personal injury, illness or an emergency:

Serious Injury or Illness

1. Call 911 immediately and be prepared to answer pertinent questions about the situation.
2. Remain calm and assist in maintaining order.
3. Administer first aid, or ask for medical assistance from medically trained parishioners, as may be needed until paramedics arrive.
4. Note any jewelry with medic alert information.

Minor Injuries

1. Treat with simple first aid measures using a first-aid kit.

In the event of an Explosion

1. Immediately take cover to protect against flying glass and debris.
2. After the effects of the explosion have subsided, call 911 and be prepared to answer pertinent questions about the situation.
3. Evacuate the immediate area of the explosion.
4. Seek and assist injured and disabled people evacuating the building.
5. Once outside keep roadways and walkways clear for emergency vehicles.
6. Wait for further instructions from emergency personnel. Do not re-enter the building unless instructed to do so by emergency personnel.

Fire

Know the location of fire extinguishers in the church and how to use them.

If a small fire:

1. Promptly discharge the fire extinguisher toward the base of the flames.
2. Immediately call 911 for assistance if necessary.

If you discover a large fire:

1. One usher/greeter call 911
2. Another alert the worshipping community.
3. One usher/greeter will assist the wheel chair bound and elderly persons through the nearest exit doors
4. One usher/greeter will open the remaining exit doors to facilitate evacuation of the church to the designated areas.

DON'T OVERDO IT

- 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. Give others an opportunity to serve too.

Jesus said, "*Whoever receives you, receives me, and whoever receives me receives the One who sent me*" (Matthew 10:40).

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR MINISTRY