



ST. MICHAEL PARISH

EXETER | NEW HAMPSHIRE

07/31/21

Greetings Parishioners of St. Michael,

It is wonderful to have you here as part of our faith community today. We are a community that enriches so many lives and has so much potential to grow – in both size AND impact. That which has brought so many of us here is exactly what we need to ensure a prosperous future for our church: a welcoming presence. The open and embracing hand of Christ. Hospitality.

What do we need for Hospitality here at St. Michael Parish? You — and Everyone Else.

Why? Because a friendly and warm greeting with smiles, handshakes, and hellos communicate a welcoming message that makes visitors and parishioners alike comfortable and relaxed.

Studies indicate that people make up their minds whether they will return to a church within the early moments of a visit. Furthermore, CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) at Georgetown found that only 24% of U.S. Adult Catholics attend Mass weekly. The question of involvement for new and existing parishioners is central to hospitality. Feeling welcomed at just *one* Mass can lead to lifelong worship, service, and salvation.

It is not enough to browse activities in the bulletin or to *only* support the church by transferring our funds each week. (Although we are grateful!) **We need to be present, in the flesh, in the church entry and aisles, to walk on the journey with others.** We need to see the presence of Jesus — *in Communion*.

And so, we invite you to join our Hospitality Ministry as a **Greeter** or an **Usher**, where you could:

- Be that first cheerful face that lets church visitors know they are home.
- Assist with seating, offertory, and help ensure a smooth, safe worship experience for all.
- Be that kind voice that calls upon parishioners to participate in the Mass and invites them to share their own time and talent in wonderful ways.
- Receive the members of our faith family who have been distant during the Pandemic as they come back to Mass, and let them know that we are so, so very glad to see them again!

And so, I invite you – men, women, and teens, alike - to learn more about our efforts to be a welcoming presence, and maybe even join our Hospitality Ministry today. **Visit the table in the back of the church on your way out of Mass.** Find additional information about our ministry offering on our parish website, stmichaelparish.org/hospitality. You can even feel free to reach out to me, anytime, with questions.

Your presence is a present. Let's share that gift of God's love with all who enter this sacred space.

Blessings,

Russ Walker Hospitality Ministry Leader

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