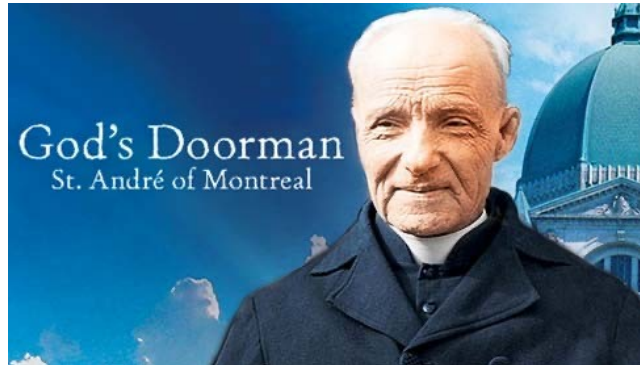


History of Greeters/Ushers in the Catholic Church

The ministry of greeters/ushers is the oldest lay ministry in the Catholic Church. In the Old Testament they were called "gatekeepers." Their ministry was so important that they were given living quarters in the temple.

According to Chronicles 1:17, their duties included opening the temple every morning, providing care and protection for all the precious vessels, preparing certain food items used in the ritual sacrifices, and guarding the temple. By the time of Christ, these gatekeepers had become known as the "Temple Guard." They were ordered to arrest Jesus, but according to John 7 they instead became interested in Jesus' message.

By the third century A.D., a clerical order known as "porters" (overseers of the doors) was instituted. During those times, it was the duty of the porters, greeters/ushers, to guard the door of the church against any intruders who might disturb the service. The porters' duties were so important that they came to be included in the rite of ordination, where they were to ring the bells, open the church, and open the book for the pastor. In 1972 Pope Paul VI abolished the order of porter and this important task was given over to the laity.



Our patron saint, Brother Andre Bessette, was a porter for 40 years at Notre Dame College in Montreal Canada. He was a Holy Cross Brother who possessed special gifts and was widely sought after for his healing power by the public.

Today's Greeters are primarily responsible for welcoming parishioners and all visitors as they enter the church providing a warm and hospitable environment. At the end of Mass they wish everyone a good day and answer any questions about the parish.

(Above history adopted from Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church in Ventura, California).

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church
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Our Lady of Fatima Hospitality/Greeters Ministry!



"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said 'Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb'."

~Luke 1: 41-43.

Joyful Welcoming

God gives gifts of charism to each one of us, that we might share them with others through our words and actions, to share the Good News of the Gospel and build up the kingdom of God. A Greeter participates in the Ministry of Hospitality and has been given special abilities and dispositions by the Lord to ensure that parishioners and visitors are made to feel welcome when they attend liturgies at Our Lady of Fatima Parish.

In Christ, you have received God's unconditional love, and in Christ, you are called to extend that same unconditional love to others. The role of Greeter in the Ministry of Hospitality is perhaps one of the most crucial in the church, because it is one of the most visible.

First impressions are often lasting impressions. When a person steps into a church for the first time, he or she evaluates the atmosphere. They ask themselves: "Will they accept me? Will it be easy to make friends? Will my spiritual and personal needs be met? Will my family like it here?" Such impressions are important not only to visitors who are attending at Our Lady of Fatima (OLF) perhaps for the first time, but to long-time parishioners as well. Both parishioners and visitors should be made to feel welcome and that we are happy that they have chosen to join us in worship. Their presence enhances our liturgical celebrations and we are happy to see them.

Your willingness to serve as a Greeter, reflects not only your response to your Baptismal call to serve the people of God, but a commitment to Christ as you share in the welcoming, teaching and leading aspects of the church. You offer hospitality! Your willingness to commit to a schedule, to prepare properly for your service, and arrive on time dressed appropriately for your assigned Mass, further reflects that commitment.

Once trained in this ministry you will be given an identifying Greeter Badge. Wear this badge humbly for it signifies that you have accepted the awesome privilege of being for others a representative of a welcoming, gracious God!

The Greeter badge is located in a drawer in the gifts table on the west side of the north entrance door.

Ministry Information

Qualities

- A loving heart and welcoming spirit.
- A practicing Catholic of faith and prayer.
- A person who is dependable, responsible, and flexible.
- A person who has the gift of hospitality, service, and evangelization.
- A member of the OLF parish.



General Responsibilities

- At OLF we are at every regularly scheduled Weekend Mass and at Masses offered during Christmas and Easter season.
- The role of the Greeter is one of offering a friendly, welcoming presence to those coming to worship and answering any questions they might have about the parish. If Greeters are unable to answer questions, they find the answers or re-direct inquires to the appropriate person.
- Committing oneself to ongoing faith and ministry formation is essential in being an effective minister. You are encouraged to attend workshops, classes, retreats, and small Christian communities to help you grow in your own faith.
- All Greeters must complete the Abuse Awareness Training for Adults at the Catholic Center or online (VIRTUS). You may go online to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe web site (archdiosf.org) to find times for training and to have access to the online training. You may also find a link to the VIRTUS training on our web-site (fatimachurchabq.org) under Ministries. When you complete the VIRTUS training you need to provide the Parish office a copy of it. This can be a hard copy or you can e-mail it to the office (veronica@fatimabq.org).

Responsibilities Before Mass

- On the day that you are assigned to greet, it is good practice to develop the habit of taking time to pray quietly for your service and if possible reflective reading of Scripture.
- Plan on arriving 15- 20 minutes before Mass starts.
- Greeters will stay at their position until Father processes to the altar. On days when the weather is good it is preferable to greet outside the doors to limit any noise in the church.
- Greeters will return to their position starting at the final blessing and stay until parishioners have left the church. Be familiar with current events in the parish by reviewing our bulletin prior to the Mass.
- Wear your Greeter Badge so that is visible to all those coming to worship.
- Warmly greet people coming to Mass and answer any questions they may have about the parish or the Mass itself.
- Be aware of the new parishioners and visitors.
- Handout music or other literature as it is needed or requested.
- Encourage the use of FORMED, formed.org. FORMED is a Catholic website supporting an authentic Catholic lifestyle.

Responsibilities After Mass

Attend coffee and donuts, if possible, and introduce new people to the community. You may be asked to assist in distributing literature after Mass, but your primary role is always to smile and interact with people as they leave Mass, thanking them for joining us. Just as you had an opportunity to make a good first impression when they arrived at church, so now make the best of an opportunity for a positive final impression as they leave, and invite them to return.

(This description of the Ministry of Hospitality has been adapted from the practices of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Boise, Idaho).