

NEIGHBORS NORTH CATHOLIC COMMUNITY USHER AND GREETER MANUAL

(Last revised October 2019, David Dashiell)

“Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.’ The Lord said to her in reply, ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.’” Luke 10:38-42



Though Mary chose the better part, contemplating Jesus, Martha still did well in spending herself in service. As ushers, we are called to give ourselves in service to our neighbor much like she did, keeping our eyes on the details and making sure that everything is going smoothly. This way, everyone can focus on what really matters: the events of the Mass. As greeters, we bring our joy and passion for the Faith to others, welcoming them and helping them feel at home in the Lord's house. We are dedicated to humbly serving Christ, remaining in the background. We strive to foster a welcoming and prayerful environment, minimizing obstacles to prayer. This is key to the congregation maintaining a prayerful attitude. It allows each person to truly enter into the liturgy, worshipping with everything at his or her disposal.

Basic Procedures

Ushers and greeters work together to make sure nothing hinders the worship of the community. They should therefore know what the other's ministry entails and ought to be ready to switch roles when needed. Greeters often chat with parishioners and can best communicate their needs. They can relay them to an usher, who can connect them with a seat or assist them during the liturgy.

Greeters

† *Before Mass:*

- Check in
 - Arrive 30 minutes before Mass.
 - Pick up your name tag and go to your door.
- Places
 - All main entrances should have at least one greeter.
 - Stand by the doors and greet visitors.
 - Hold the door for visitors, but **do not prop the doors** (to keep the temperature pleasant).
- Coordination
 - If appropriate, you may help the elderly get out of their cars and/or get into wheelchairs.
 - Watch for suspicious activity and be attentive to the needs of visitors (water, special seating)
 - Get water for those who need it and connect visitors with an usher if special seating is needed.
- Find a seat
 - Once the ministers line up for the procession, take your seat.
 - You may stay to greet until the procession begins moving if you prefer, but do not stay later.

† *After Mass:*

- None

Ushers

† *Before Mass:*

- Check in
 - Arrive 25 minutes before Mass starts or 30 if you are the Captain.
 - Check in with the Captain and pick up your name tag.
 - **Captain:** find the people who have signed up to be gift-bearers. If they are not there five minutes before Mass, find other people to take up the gifts.
 - **Captain:** for special liturgies (First Communion, Baptism, Confirmation), set up any needed reserved seating with the sacristan and direct the appropriate people to those seats.
- Places
 - Some ushers stand by the inner doors and greet (**greeters have the outer doors**), while others stand inside the church and keep an eye on how many people are seated.
 - **The inner doors should be closed at all times during Mass. At Saint Teresa of Avila only**, these doors should also be closed before and after Mass. Sound travels too easily through them to have them propped. Please open them for parishioners without propping.
 - **Captain:** assign each usher a section for seating, counting, collection(s), and Communion.
- Seating
 - If the chapel starts to fill up, begin seating.
 - **Captain:** if the church is becoming packed, ask the **second reader** to make an announcement for everyone to move towards the center aisle. This announcement should already be printed on the reader introduction sheet, and will be made just before Mass begins.

† *During Mass:*

- Close the doors once the procession has come through.
- If necessary, continue seating through the Alleluia. **Only seat while the congregation is standing.**
- Get water for those who need it and snacks for those who have dangerously low blood sugar.
- Counting
 - Count people during the collection and give your numbers to the Captain.
 - **Captain:** write the count on the sheet.
- Collections
 - Once the General Intercessions begin, prepare for the collection.
 - Do the first collection **immediately after** the closing prayer for the General Intercessions, **depositing the money into the Captain's basket.**
 - **Captain:** immediately take it to the safe. Do not present it with the gifts.
 - If there is one, do the second collection as the gifts are being presented. Bring the money to the Captain, who will put it into a deposit bag, label it, and drop it into the safe.
- Communion
 - If necessary and if they are standing in the way of a Communion area, people should be directed to an appropriate spot in the church. The **Captain** determines how to do this, but should do so after giving one or two people the Sign of Peace (but before the Lamb of God).
 - Usher Communion.
 - **Usher from the inside** of your section (towards the center aisle or in it).
 - Receive Communion after your section is finished.
 - Back usher (if applicable): block people from crossing behind the Extraordinary Ministers and clergy. Ask the sacristan to help you block if you do not think you will get there in time.

† *After Mass:*

- Prop the inner doors **after the final blessing (not before)** to let the procession through.
- Stand by inner doors with bulletins and hand them to those who want them.
- Turn in gifts, check out, and leave.

In-Depth

Greeters

- Remember, **you are often the first people from the community that others will see that day.** Whether they are visitors or parishioners, we should give them every reason to come back to Mass and to earnestly worship the Lord. You do not have to smile all the time, but you do have to be friendly and natural. You are here to make people feel welcome, not to smother people. **Be friendly, but do not be overwhelming!**
- **Do not prop the doors before Mass.** You should open the doors to let parishioners and visitors in, but do not keep them propped. The ushers should be at the inner doors, keeping them open, but the outer doors should be closed to keep the area at a pleasant temperature. **The only exception is at Incarnation,** where keeping the doors open is often best when it is warm because of the lack of air conditioning.
- **Greet each person promptly as he or she approaches you.** Be open to conversation, but if multiple people are coming towards the door it is not a good idea to chat with a person or group for a long period of time. Some visitors may be left behind because your time is being monopolized. Make sure that each person who passes by is at least acknowledged by you. He or she deserves your attention, and your greeting may be the difference that makes them return to Mass.
- **Your greeting does not have to be anything specific.** Do what seems natural to you, as long as it is appropriate and socially acceptable. For example, you could say something like “Good morning! Welcome.” you could say “Hi there! My name is _____. How are you today?” or you could simply wave and say “Hello!” Avoid “Welcome to _____,” because they may already be parishioners. If there are more people coming in than you have the time to greet properly, you can make brief eye contact, nod, and smile naturally as they pass by.
- **Be attentive to suspicious activity and to the needs of others.** You are not only the first person some people will see, but you are also the first people to notice anything out of the ordinary. If someone comes in with a large backpack, discreetly alert an usher so that they can keep an eye on them throughout Mass. Many people attend Mass with backpacks, but some use them to steal things. This may never happen, but it is good to be aware of. Clean up any spills and point out restrooms to those who need them. If a person needs water, get it for them. If you see someone asking about reserved or special seating, connect them with an usher. This applies to handicapped people and to those who are a part of a special liturgy (e.g. Confirmation).
- **Saint Teresa of Avila only:** if you are greeting in Schoppol Hall, put up the “Mass has begun” sign before going upstairs for Mass. A good time to do that is when the bell rings right before Mass begins. Cross Schoppol Hall to the other staircase to go up for Mass if it has already begun.

Ushers

- Your basic duties are: **seating, counting, collection, and Communion.**
- For each of these duties, the **Captain** will assign you to a section of the church. Remember your section.
- Your section is home base for all of your duties. **Stay there and you will be less distracting.**
- **Captain:** make sure those who are standing are counted, given the basket, and ushered for Communion.

Assigning sections

Each church is laid out differently. Incarnation and Saint Sebastian have two long columns broken up in the center of the church. At Saint Sebastian, the columns are broken up a second time to make six total sections. Saint Athanasius has two long, unbroken columns of pews. Saint Teresa has four medium-sized sections in a clamshell shape, side by side. Here is the number of ushers needed for each duty based on the location:

Incarnation

- Seating
 - One or two ushers assigned to each column.
- Counting
 - One usher counting each column, or two ushers counting each column: one can double-check the other, or one can count the front half while the other counts the back half.
- Collection
 - Two ushers per column.
- Communion
 - Two ushers in the front center aisle. You can get by with only one usher ushering both sides.

Saint Athanasius

- Seating
 - Two ushers assigned to each column. You can get by with one per column.
- Counting
 - One usher counting each column; you can also break up the sections and have one usher count the front half while the other counts the back half.
- Collection
 - Two ushers per column.
- Communion
 - Two ushers in the front center aisle. You can get by with only one usher ushering both sides.

Saint Sebastian

- Seating
 - Two or three ushers per column. If two, one takes either the front two or back two sections in the column; whichever sections have less people.
 - It may be helpful for the front ushers to stand at the front, discreetly indicating the number of people they can seat in a particular pew. The back ushers can then direct people to them.
- Counting
 - Two or three ushers counting each column: same principle as seating. The front ushers should stand at the halfway point, on the sides.
- Collection
 - Four or six ushers per column: two for the front half, two for the back half. Walk together until you reach the halfway point, then wait for the front ushers to reach the front to bow together and begin the collection (see below for more details).
- Communion
 - One or two ushers in the center of each section where there are ministers (meaning one to six ushers total): very front, center, and break towards the back. One usher can usher both sides for each section, or two can usher each section.

Saint Teresa

- Seating
 - One usher for each of the four sections.
- Counting
 - One usher per section.
- Collection
 - Two ushers per section.
- Communion
 - One usher per section, and potentially a fifth usher for the foyer or side chapel.

Detailed Guidelines

- Before Mass
 - Pick up your name tag.
 - Greet and hand out bulletins at the inner doors. **Please prop these doors before and after Mass, but not during Mass. It is very easy to hear conversations through the inner doors.**
 - There only needs to be one usher at each door. The rest should be inside the church, watching to make sure that everything is running smoothly and that the church does not get too crowded.
 - **Captain:** coordinate with the clergy to set up reserved seating if this is a special liturgy.
 - **Captain:** Make sure you have spoken to the assigned gift-bearers at least five minutes before Mass. If they did not show up, find other gift-bearers and make sure they know when to come back.
 - **Captain:** be attentive to those who look dehydrated and to those who have low blood sugar. Know where water bottles are so you can get them if need be.
- Seating
 - Seating is only essential when the church is packed and people cannot find seats.
 - The only exception is for special seating. The Captain will know when this applies.
 - **If people are standing in the back for a long time and are having trouble finding a seat, you should seat them.** The church might not be packed, but that does not mean that people can see the open seats as easily as you can.
 - **Only seat when the congregation is standing. Do not seat during the readings.**
 - This minimizes distractions. We want to be noticed as little as possible.
 - Stop seating once the Alleluia ends.
 - Be assertive, but do not push it.
 - Ask along the lines of “Would you like a seat? We have a couple of rows on this side that are only half full.” People like to know that you are happy to seat them and that you know specifically where you can seat them.
 - If they say no, you can ask if they are sure, but humbly accept their decision after that point.
 - When seating, **walk the person all the way to their seat**, take a step to the side, and motion them towards the pew. Return to the back once they begin moving into the pew.
 - **It is perfectly acceptable to ask people to scoot in. Remember to do it politely.**
 - Do this before you walk someone down the aisle so that you know they will actually move.
 - It helps to tell them what’s coming: “Do you think you could make room for one or two more people?” If they say no, do not force them to move.
 - **Captain:** ask the second reader to make the announcement for everyone to move towards the center aisle if the church gets too packed.

- Counting
 - Count during the Collection.
 - Method
 - As you pass the baskets along, count the number of people in that row.
 - Counting in sets of five is helpful.
 - **Only the total is important:** it is not necessary to have a separate count for each pew.
 - Tallying and communicating
 - Do not use the clickers (pitch counters): they can be distracting.
 - Once you have finished your section, quietly give your number to the Captain in the back.
 - **Captain:** total each section and write the number on the sheet.
- Collection
 - **Captain:** ready the collection baskets during the General Intercessions. Once you have given the baskets to your ushers, gather the gift-bearers and give them their gifts (wine + bread) from the table.
 - Receive your basket from the Captain during the Intercessions and stand behind your section.
 - The process
 - As soon as the concluding prayer is finished, walk in line with each other to the front of your sections, bow from the waist to the altar, as a unit, turn around, and begin the collection. **Do not begin moving up to the front for the collection until the celebrant finishes the closing prayer for the Intercessions.**
 - One usher should walk along each side of the same section. This means that each usher is responsible for half of every pew in that section, no matter what kind of basket is used.
 - Pass or extend the basket to about halfway down each aisle, making sure to get it back.
 - Count the number of people in each row as you pass the baskets.
 - Once you get to the back, consolidate the money into the gift-bearer's basket. The Captain will be holding it.
 - **Captain and one other usher:** bag the collection, label it, and deposit it. **All bags should be labeled with your names, your signatures, the date, and the destination.** E.g. "Joe Murray and Abe Tot, Sunday December 15th, Second Collection, Community Center." In this case the destination is "Regular Sunday Collection." **Do not present the collection with the gifts.**
 - Second collections
 - The ushers for the second collection should be the same ones who did the first collection. They should go line up at the back of their sections immediately after the first collection is deposited in the Captain's basket.
 - Come up to the front of your sections about three seconds after the gift procession begins, to avoid running into them. Stay close to the pews and do the second collection as the gifts are being presented.
 - Do the second collection in the exact same way as the first.
 - Bring the money to the Captain (who will be depositing the first collection) and consolidate it into his large basket. He will immediately bag it, label it, seal it, and deposit it.
 - **Captain: remember, all bags should be labeled with two names and signatures, the date, and the destination.**

- Communion
 - If necessary, immediately after giving one or two people the Sign of Peace, move people who are blocking Communion areas to another location where they can receive Communion. **This is the call of the Captain, who communicates the specific plan to the others during the Homily.**
 - **Do not overdo the Sign of Peace.**
 - You are expected to move during the Lamb of God (see below). You do not have time to give every person the Sign of Peace, and it is not appropriate to walk along the aisle shaking each person's hand. This becomes very disruptive once the Lamb of God begins and people are trying to pray.
 - Going up
 - **During the Lamb of God** (at the same time as the extraordinary ministers), walk to the very front of your section, just in front of the first pew.
 - If you are not facing the front, the “first pew” is the one closest to your minister.
 - If you are going to the front, **bow from the waist** when you reach the front and then move in front of the first pew. Stand there patiently.
 - Remain in your places, bowing your head out of reverence when a minister passes by you with the Precious Body or Precious Blood.
 - Ushering
 - Once the way is clear, stand in the aisle at the end of the first pew, facing your minister.
 - **Do not begin ushering until your minister arrives at his/her station.**
 - Step back from the first pew, allowing the people to come out, and motion towards the aisle.
 - Stand beside the next pew, not moving back to let them out until the third to last person in the first row has reached the aisle. Continue with each row in the same way.
 - **Always usher from the inside out.** If you are ushering a side section at Saint Teresa of Avila, make sure you stand in the aisle closest to the center, not the wall aisle.
 - If your section is about to finish before the section using the same aisle, you may usher those on the other side across the aisle to join with the last people in your section.
 - You do not have to do this: you are welcome to just let the line end and receive last.
 - If you do this, make sure you start two rows behind the row that is already coming out in the other section, so that the other usher can still usher the row behind him.
 - Receive once your section is finished, as the last person in line.
 - Once you receive Communion, go to the back and either stand or kneel out of the way.
- After Mass
 - **After** the final blessing, prop the inner doors and stand by them with bulletins.
 - Once the post-Mass rush dies down, put away your tags, check out, and leave.

Emergencies

- **The Captain and another usher should have a cell phone on them for emergencies.** These ushers are expected to call 9-1-1 if there are any emergencies during Mass.
- If there is an emergency situation and help is needed, the Captain should go to the celebrant and notify him so that he can make a decision. He should know what is going on.

A Quick Review

- Remember, the church is not a place for idle conversation. Please keep conversations in the narthex unless they are necessary. When you are doing your ministries, you are still at Mass and Jesus is still being sacrificed on the altar or speaking to you in His Word. Remember this, and know that being on the other side of a set of doors or being in another room is not an excuse to chat idly during Mass.
- As ministers, we are leaders performing our work in view of the entire congregation. As leaders, we ought to model the Church's teaching. The Church has guidelines for when to sit, stand, kneel, genuflect, and bow during Mass:
 - **Bow from the waist** whenever you pass by the altar. This is called a **profound bow**. The altar is the place of sacrifice, where Christ is truly made present under the species of bread and wine, and it is the focal point of the liturgy.
 - **Genuflect on you right knee** whenever approaching the tabernacle or passing by it. It holds the Lord.
 - **During Mass**, the altar takes precedence over the tabernacle, because the sacrifice of Christ is happening in real time. Therefore, if the tabernacle and altar are in the same area, you should bow towards the altar when you pass by **instead of** genuflecting towards the tabernacle.
 - **Outside of Mass**, Christ present in the tabernacle takes precedence over the altar, since the sacrifice is not going on at the moment. Therefore, if both are in the same area, you should genuflect towards the tabernacle when you pass by **instead of** bowing towards the altar.
 - **During Mass or not**, genuflect when approaching the tabernacle to retrieve the Lord.
- The Church asks us to kneel after the Lamb of God out of profound respect for Our Lord, present in the Holy Eucharist. However, many ministers in our grouping are not physically able to kneel. This means that we will remain standing at this time.
- Please **keep your hands folded** if you are not carrying anything. This is a standard posture of reverence for all liturgical ministers. It was specifically requested by our pastor.
- If you believe another minister needs correction, please bring it to the attention of the clergy or staff and **let them correct the minister. Do not approach them yourself.**

Dress Code

Sundays and Feast Days

Sunday best (formal), clean and tidy

Weekdays

Business Casual (nice shirt/blouse/dress/pants/skirt), clean and tidy

*Though you are not in the sanctuary, it is still important that you dress well when coming to Mass to help people focus on the Lord.

† Notes about this dress code:

- † It is the **clergy's** responsibility to enforce the dress code. They have expressed the desire not to allow a minister to serve if he/she is poorly dressed. Please understand that if a member of the clergy asks you not to serve because of improper dress, it has to do with reverence for the Lord.
 - † The **purpose of a dress code** is twofold: reverence for God and consideration for our neighbor.
 - † We perform our ministries in the presence of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. At Mass, He comes down from heaven with His angels and offers Himself for us once again on the altar of sacrifice. We should dress for this most special occasion, out of respect for God.
 - † Though we cannot control the actions or thoughts of others, we can control how we present ourselves. Part of this is done through our dress, in which we express our consideration for our neighbor through clothing that most easily directs the congregation to the liturgy. People come to Mass to worship God without distraction, so we should do everything we can to allow them to focus on Him and not us.
 - † This dress code is very general. We trust you to know what is too long, short, or inappropriate for Mass. A word of reminder that the sanctuary is raised higher than the rest of the church – people can see more.
 - † A good rule is that if you have any question about a certain article of clothing, there is a good chance you should not wear it while ministering. When in doubt, ask the priest.
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