

## St. John the Apostle Roman Catholic Church Usher Guidelines

### Preparation:

- Be aware of the schedule
  - If there is a weekend that is split between 2 months (Saturday on Month and Sunday a different month) assignments are based on the month, not the weekend.
  - Do not rely on the bulletin to have the correct schedule
  - The current schedule is distributed monthly by email and is also posted in the ushers room
- Find a substitute if you will not be able to attend your assigned Mass
- Arrive 20-30 minutes before Mass
- Dress appropriately – (Jacket and tie for men)

### Before Mass begins:

- Review the Ushers Notebook to see if there is any information you need to be aware of
- Welcome the parishioners as they enter the Church
- Decide on positions for each usher
- One usher should be posted in the sacristy before Mass
- If you do not have a minimum of 5 ushers, find an usher from the congregation to assist
- Decide on which usher will do the collection in the choir
- Ensure the gifts are on the table in the back of the Nave. If they are not there 10 minutes before the beginning of Mass go to the sacristy and get them
- Ensure there are enough collection baskets and that they are labeled appropriately
- Select a family to bring up the gifts. **Be sure the family is appropriately dressed** (no shorts, jeans or t-shirts)
- Assist parishioners in finding seats, accompanying them to the seating row. Seat parishioners **before** readings and during **pauses** after first reading and after responsorial psalm; **DO NOT** seat parishioners during readings or homily.
- Usher position before Mass begins:
  - Two ushers at the back of the main aisle
  - One usher at each transept
  - One usher in the choir loft
  - As the church fills the ushers in the back should direct the parishioners to the ushers stationed in the transept

### During Mass:

- An usher should be positioned at each of the following locations for the entire Mass; center aisle(2), left transept, right transept, choir loft
- Ensure all doors are closed
- Seat late parishioners using the side aisles and transept (try not to have people standing in the back of the church)
- When a parishioner exits for any reason, open the door for them and close it afterwards
- After Mass starts all ushers should be at their assigned positions (we don't want to be a distraction for the priests or congregation)
- Keep doorways and aisles clear of any obstructions (wheelchairs, walkers, strollers)
- An usher should check the Fellowship Hall and Garden Room during Mass

- Monitor the congregation for any unusual activity (illness, suspicious person etc.)

#### **Offertory:**

- Be aware of altar servers and gift family processing down the aisle and move close to the pews until they pass.
- What to do if family doesn't go to the back for the gifts (usher should quickly select someone in the back pews)
- What to do if family doesn't bring either the wine or the hosts (usher should quickly retrieve the wine or hosts and bring forward to the priest)

#### **Collection:**

- All ushers should move at the same time from the back of the church to start the collection

##### **Single collection only:**

- Main Aisle – one basket for each side, to be started in the first row. If we have 5 ushers available at the Mass and second set of baskets can be started midway down the aisle
- If 2 sets of baskets are being distributed in the center aisle (front and back), one usher should monitor the front set of baskets and a second usher should monitor the back set of baskets (be sure the usher monitoring the front collection knows where to stop).
- Transept – One basket for each transept.
- Choir Loft – If only four ushers are present, one of the ushers from the transept should go to the choir loft to take the collection

##### **Two collections:**

- Main Aisle – two baskets (1 regular collection, 1 special collection) for each side, to be started in the first row.
- Wait until the first basket has gone past the 3<sup>rd</sup> row before starting the 2<sup>nd</sup> collection basket.
- If we have 5 ushers available at the Mass a second set of baskets can be started midway down the aisle (be sure the usher monitoring the front collection knows where to stop).
- Transept – Two baskets (1 regular collection, 1 special collection) for each transept.
- Choir Loft – If only four ushers are present, one of the ushers from the transept should go to the choir loft to take the collection
- Actively monitor and assist the baskets as they are being passed
- **Ensure all baskets are returned**
- Do not combine the baskets at the back of the church but bring all baskets back to the usher room
- Follow standard procedures to place collections in the security bags
  - All collection monies should be placed in a sealed security bag
  - The security bag should be signed by 2 adult ushers
  - The security log should be signed by 2 adult ushers
  - With the exception of the 12:30 Mass all collection security bags should be placed in the safe
  - For the 12:30 Mass
    - 2 adult ushers should take the collection security bags and log to the money counters in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room.
    - The money counters should sign the log in the presence of the ushers
    - The log should be brought back down to the safe room
- Return the empty baskets to the back of the church in preparation for the next Mass

- Note: Youth ushers are not permitted to be alone with the collections

#### **Holy Communion:**

- The usher assigned to the choir loft should ensure the elevator is at the first floor for the Eucharist Minister
- Once the altar boys rise and go up on the altar all ushers should move at the same time from the back of the church to their communion station

#### **Main Aisle Ushers:**

- Once the Eucharist Minister receives communion ushers should then escort the first row to the communion station. The priest should not have to wait for the first row of parishioners to come up to receive communion.
- **7:30 Mass Only**
  - After the first two rows receive communion the main aisle ushers should go the far corner of the last row in preparation of sending parishioners to the transept communion positions.
  - Once the last row of parishioners in the transept are on line to receive communion parishioners from the last row of the main aisle should be directed to the transept communion positions.
- Parishioners receiving communion at the transept position should stay close to the outer wall as they walk up to receive communion

#### **Transept Ushers:**

- The section closest to the altar should receive communion first
- The usher should stand at the first row of the section facing forward until after the first section is completed and then direct the forward facing section to receive communion
- When the last two rows rise to receive communion the transept usher should signal the usher in the back to start directing parishioners from the rear of the church to the transept communion positions

#### **Side Aisle Ushers:**

- The Eucharistic Minister will be placed at either the 4th pillar on the side aisle (except 7:30 a.m. Mass)
- Ushers should direct parishioners to the Eucharistic Minister and have them return to their pew via the center aisle

#### **Choir Loft Usher:**

- Meet the Eucharistic Minister at the back of the church and escort them to the choir loft
- The Eucharistic Minister will be positioned in the back of the choir loft under the large stained glass window
- Ushers should start directing parishioners from the 1<sup>st</sup> pew in the front and work their way back
- When the choir is present they may not receive Holy Communion immediately but will do so when there is a break in the music. At this time the usher should stop the existing Holy Communion line and give the choir members priority to receive Holy Communion
- When Holy Communion is finished the usher should escort the Eucharistic Minister back down stairs

**Recession:**

- Once the final blessing is complete the glass doors should then be opened
- An usher should be available to hand out bulletins at each exit, (main doors, side door, handicap entrance)
- Two ushers should go through the pews to ensure no personal belongings have been left behind, return kneelers to the upright position, clean up any trash etc. (Latex gloves are available for your use)

**Youth Ushers**

- Youth ushers can perform all of the duties as an adult usher with the following exceptions:
  - Youth ushers cannot be alone with the collection baskets
  - Youth ushers may not sign the collection security bags

**Medical Situations**

- Assess the situation and determine if professional medical help is needed. If help is needed:
  - Call 911 and identify the location as St. John the Apostle Catholic church at 55 Oakcrest Manor Drive
  - One usher should stay with the ill person
  - Try to get as much information about the person and their condition as possible.
  - Another usher should wait outside for the emergency responders
- Items you may find in the ushers room for medical emergencies
  - First Aid Kit
  - Wheel chair
  - Bottled water and juice
  - Latex gloves
- There is an Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) on the wall by the janitor's closet if needed. The AED should only be used by someone trained in its use
- Please notify Frank Nauer or Ken Tschida afterwards of any medical situations

**Miscellaneous:**

- Please record any incidents in the Ushers Notebook in the Ushers room
- If you are not ushering at the Mass you are attending please ask the on-duty usher if they need assistance
- **Missing Usher badges** - There are several generic usher badges that you may use if you forget your badge. Please be sure to return these badges.
- Keep the usher room locked at all times.