

The first task of the parish community as part of the Universal Church 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. You as an Usher / Greeter as a minister of hospitality is equipped for this ministry by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of hospitality is crucial because it is so visible in the Church. 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.

Those who desire to serve as minister of hospitality should be active and faithful members of the Church. They should be of godly character and reputation. Respect for others, discretion and appropriate decorum are the hallmarks of a minister of hospitality, - the qualities found in a mature Christian.

Ministers of hospitality are part of the worshipping community. As such, they are to participate fully in the music, responses, and prayers of the liturgy. At times, however, the special duties of the minister may limit his or her ability to participate. Yet, *every effort* should be made by the ministers of hospitality to be models of participation in the worship of the Church.

[Click here for Photos of Ushers from the 2013 Corpus Christi Mass](#)

What Ushers/Greeters Do:

- Be there. Remember that God's people need you and are depending on you.



- Arrive early, give a moment to silent prayerful preparation for your ministry. Arrange all those things that need to be readied and then be on hand to greet the people as they arrive.

- Be at your best. Look pleasant. As a rule of thumb, those serving at Mass, Lectors, Ushers, Choir, should dress comparably.

- Make your first word a word of welcome. Keep on the lookout for new members of the Parish, for visitors, strangers, or the aged (anyone who may need special attention).

- When you recognize newcomers...Help them to feel at home, give them a copy of the ***Visitor's Guide to The Mass.***

An Usher/Greeter Should Exhibit:

•JOY

Cultivate a sense of humor in the face of difficulty. Never show irritation. Have a nonjudgmental attitude for those who may arrive late.

•DEPENDABILITY

If an usher/greeter cannot serve at a scheduled service, it is the usher/greeter's responsibility to find a substitute, or at least let your Head usher/greeter know that you won't be there.

•KINDNESS

When you lead people up the aisle, walk slowly or you will lose them. Do not merely point to a seat, but lead people there personally.

•REVERENCE

There should be no conversations in the back of the church prior to Mass, least of all among the usher/greeters. Casual conversations by usher/greeters can be heard in the Chapel and throughout the church and are distracting for those who are attempting to prepare themselves for the Liturgy.

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the One who sent me" (Mt. 10:40).

The willingness to respond to your Baptismal call to serve the people of God, in the capacity of an Usher, reflects your commitment to Christ. The willingness to commit to a monthly schedule; to arrive on time and to be a **friendly, welcoming presence** to those coming to worship here at St. Joseph is a further reflection of your willingness to respond fully to your Baptismal call and Confirmation graces (CCC # 1316-17)

Ushers / Greeters assure a welcoming presence, while ensuring orderly seating at all Masses offered in this Parish, and enhance the beauty of the Liturgy and become an instrument through whom God may be present to members of the Assembly. "For the sake of my relatives and friends, I will say, 'Peace be with you!' For the sake of the house of our Lord, I will pray for your good." (Ps 122:8-9) and "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of the wicked." (Ps 84:11)

Once they have been commissioned to serve in the Ministry, an Usher will have accepted the awesome privilege of welcoming and being for others a representative of a welcoming gracious,

God! (Vat. II, Lumen Gentium Ch. 2, 11 & 12).

All those interested and willing to serve is encouraged to inquire with the head Ushers and / or priest after Mass. We hope to provide an email address for Ushers / Hospitality in the future here for your convenience.

General Ministry Information:



The Ministry of Ushers has assisted parish worship for generations since long before the 2nd Vatican Council. In light of the liturgical reforms of the 2nd

Vatican Council, much attention was focused on new liturgical roles by the laity and ushers were often ignored when it came to outlining new expectations of the usher role.

At St. Joseph Parish, at every regularly scheduled Week-End Mass and at Masses offered during the Christmas and Easter Season, the Ministry of Ushers is an important and valued Ministry.

The role of the Usher, here at St. Joseph Parish, is one of offering a friendly welcoming presence to those coming to worship, providing assistance in securing seating for latecomers, providing assistance in emergencies, participating in Eucharistic processions, providing assistance in taking up the collection, providing assistance at the time of the presentation of the gifts and at Communion, providing assistance in the dissemination of the parish bulletin and participating in the clean-up of the church after the completion of Mass.

Missal Formational Materials provided by the Secretariat for the Liturgy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002.

Ministries and Roles Within the Liturgical Assembly at Mass

In addition to the ordained ministries there are roles in the liturgy which are exercised by lay people who place their time and talent at the service of the liturgical assembly as acolytes (altar servers), lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, cantors, choir members, instrumentalists, leaders of song and **ushers**. Others contribute their time and talent to planning and organizing the liturgy, to keeping the church and the vestments, vessels and appointments clean and well-ordered or to providing decorations that reflect the spirit of the liturgical feast or season.

Preparation for Liturgical Roles

The *General Instruction* makes it very clear that this variety of offices and roles is desirable and should be maintained. In fact it goes so far as to state: *... all, therefore, whether they are ordained ministers or Christian faithful, in fulfilling their offices or their duty, should carry out solely but completely that which pertains to them."*

Not only, therefore, is it desirable that individuals function in roles of service at Mass, it is clear from the *Instruction* that if a deacon, for example, is present, the priest celebrant or a concelebrant should not read the Gospel. And the lector should not also take on the role of server and/or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

There is a wide variety of services to be performed, and *it is desirable that different individuals exercise those services so that the talents and gifts God has placed within the Christian community are fully utilized and these roles of service are not monopolized by a few.*

It is not sufficient, however, simply to have a "warm body" filling a given role. Those engaged in liturgical roles need to be well-prepared for those roles and to know how to carry them out with reverence, dignity and understanding. *Obtaining the proper preparation requires a further gift of time on the part of the person being prepared as well as on the part of those in the parish responsible for the training of liturgical ministers.*

Finally, the practical task of assigning individuals to particular Masses and organizing the distribution of roles is another indispensable element in the fabric of well-ordered liturgical ministry in a parish.

Willingness to Serve

Video - [Called to Serve](#)



But before individuals can be prepared for liturgical roles, there must first be individuals who are willing to assume those roles. All the baptized need to understand that part of their duty regarding liturgy is to accept some responsibility for the liturgy, to place themselves and their God-given talents at the service of the liturgical community whenever possible.

If liturgy is a duty as well as a right, then part of that duty for those able to undertake these tasks is the responsibility to assume such key roles as those of lector, server or acolyte, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, usher, choir member, etc. . Whether one brings up the gifts at the Presentation, reads the Word of God, assists with the distribution of Communion and brings the Eucharist to those unable to be present at Mass, serves at the altar, provides music that augments the joy, solemnity and festivity of the celebration or serves the assembled community as an usher, he or she is contributing to the worship of the community and fulfilling the responsibility that comes with Baptism.

Not all members of the parish community will have the time, energy, strength or ability to serve in these roles, however, individuals must be careful not to excuse themselves too easily. And it might also be helpful for us to reexamine our situation every so often. The time available to a business person or to parents with young children may be very limited.

But eventually business people retire and children grow up, leaving those individuals with more free time at their disposal. What is important is that all understand that the celebration of liturgy is not just the responsibility of the pastor, although he is delegated by the Bishop to oversee the liturgical life of the parish. Pastors need the help of their people, the people who are serious about living out their baptismal right and responsibility to worship.

Informed, Active Participation

Finally, this catalogue of specialized roles might give the impression that those who are not exercising one of these roles are free to sit back passively and simply let the liturgy happen around them. Nothing could be further from the truth. Those who come together for liturgy do not have the luxury of acting as passive "pew potatoes," waiting for all to be done for them. The liturgy is not only their right, it is their duty, their responsibility, and that responsibility includes full engagement throughout the liturgical celebration.

In their sincere efforts to participate, those present minister to the priest celebrant, to others who serve in liturgical roles, and to one another. Their attention and active engagement in the celebration can draw from the priest celebrant and the other ministers the best they have to offer.

Their enthusiastic song and verbal responses made with conviction can encourage others to sing and respond; their very presence at the celebration of Mass when so many other enticing options might have been chosen instead supports and reinforces others who have made the same choice.

The liturgy, then, is about the action of God's own people, each with different offices and roles, each office and role, from that of bishop and priest to that of usher and sacristan, one of service, not of privilege, a mirror of Christ who washed the feet of his disciples and instructed his followers to imitate his example of service.

[Links Page](#)

Above taken from :

1. [The General Instruction on the Roman Missal - USCCB](#)
2. [Ministries and Roles Within the Liturgical Assembly at Mass - USCCB](#)
3. ["Happy Are Those Who Are Called to His Supper": On Preparing to Receive Christ Worthily in the Eucharist" USCCB, Nov., 2006](#)
4. [St. Joseph Parish Usher / Greeter Handbook - 2009](#)