

Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More



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Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers Handbook



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Table of Contents

Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers Handbook Cover.....1
Table of Contents.....2
Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers Ministry, Prayer, History and Usher Checklist.....3
Eucharist/Housekeeping/Humble Service/Appropriate Attire.....4
Scheduling/Badges /Usher Locations/Procedures (Prior to Liturgy).....5
Procedures (Gathering Rite/Collections of Gifts/Sign of Peace)..... 6
Communion Procession/Concluding Rite/Mass Variations/Special Situations.....7
Interest Form (complete and return at your earliest convenience).....8

“Whoever receives you, receives me, and whoever receives me, receives the one who sent me.” - Matthew 10:40



Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers Ministry – Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers for St. Thomas More Catholic Church act as the liaisons for our parish to warmly welcome God’s people to each liturgical celebration. Other duties, responsibilities and guidelines are outlined in this handbook.

A Prayer for Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers

Heavenly Father, you have bestowed upon each of us many gifts. Those whom you have called to serve are present to show our graciousness to you and our faith as we use these gifts. We ask that you provide guidance as we enable our talents to express your love for us in our daily lives and to communicate your love to our community and our parish family. We ask that you enlighten us whenever we are called to serve this ministry and empower us with your grace and forgiveness so we may execute our responsibilities in welcoming and providing assistance to our priests, deacons and parishioners. Keep us focused on our objectives and commitment to serve in Your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Usher History

The ministry of hospitality/ushers is one of the oldest ministries in the Catholic Church. During the time of our Lord and Savior, our predecessors were known as “**doorkeepers**,” and numbered in the hundreds. Around the 3rd century, AD ushers were known as “**Porters**,” used to guard the doors against intruders that may disrupt services.

Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers Checklist

- **Arrival:** 20- 30 minutes prior to each Mass
- **Check-in:** Pick up your nametag from the Vesting Room and inform the Sacristan and hospitality leader of your arrival.
- **Doors:** Ministers of hospitality shall station themselves at the three front exterior door entrances, weather permitting (i.e. rain/heat), open doors, welcome, and greet our parishioners and visitors. It is important to accommodate those using walkers or wheelchairs by assisting them to their seats.
- **Offertory:** When the Deacon or Lector approaches the Ambo to read the Prayers of the Faithful, all Ministers of Hospitality should proceed to their stations to collect their baskets. If the Hospitality Leader has chosen parishioners to present the gifts, they will meet in the back of the church once collections have started. Ministers of Hospitality will proceed down each aisle to the first row in unison. After the Offertory Song has begun, they will bow to the altar together and then begin the collection. (See procedures under Presentation of Gifts for additional guidance).
- **Eucharist:** Once the Extraordinary Ministers have proceeded to the altar, the Ministers of Hospitality shall move to each of the aisles and proceed together to the front pews, bow to the altar, and await the arrival of the Extraordinary Ministers, Priest or Deacon who are distributing communion. They should proceed, pew by pew, front to back of the church, directing each aisle. Ministers of Hospitality should be the last to receive communion and will inform an available Extraordinary Minister of parishioners wishing to receive communion in any part of the church.
- **Recession:** Prior to the conclusion of Mass, each Minister of Hospitality will return to the exits; to greet and pass out bulletins at each set of doors. Two will station themselves at the center exit doors to thank parishioners for attending Mass.
- **Housekeeping:** At the 5:15 Vigil, 11:45 and 6pm Sunday Masses, after the parishioners have departed, each Minister of Hospitality should quickly walk their assigned pew area of the church and gather anything left behind by parishioners for the Lost and Found Box in O’Brien Hall . If items are found, they will inform the Hospitality Leader. When finished, each Usher will return their badge to the Vesting Room. (See procedure for Concluding Rite)

Introduction

Humble Service

Ways to Welcome:

- Smile and make eye contact.
- Extend a firm, but warm handshake.
- Offer a sincere and friendly greeting.
 - “Good morning!”, “Welcome!”, “Thank you for coming today!”, or “It’s so good to see you!”
- Be polite and welcoming.
- Give full attention to each person entering the church doors, especially people you don’t know.

Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers:

What it means to serve:

- Your initial greeting is the significant gift that welcomes those who enter to experience their faith.
- Yours is the gift to show compassion and assistance to those entering late by finding them an available seat among the congregation.
- When appropriate, assist parents with infants or toddlers by informing them that the Nursery is available (10am only).
- Your greeting and smile may be the first impression of St. Thomas More parish for those attending Mass, even though they may not acknowledge you.
- When taking up the Collection, remember that it is not a task, it is a **Ministry**.

Appropriate Attire

As a representative of the **House of Our Lord**; it is a sign of respect to dress appropriately in the execution of the Hospitality/Usher Ministry. **For men**, a coat and tie is encouraged. However, dress clothes such as slacks, and a button down shirt may also be worn. **For women**, a modest dress, slacks or knee length skirts are appropriate. No halter tops or spaghetti strap tops should be worn, shoulders should be covered. Under no circumstances shall any usher come to serve in gym shorts, sweatpants, cutoffs and tee-shirts. No beachwear. Ministers who are not scheduled to serve are asked to please dress appropriately in case they are needed to serve.

Scheduling

Similar to our Lectors and Extraordinary Ministers, the Ministers of Hospitality will be scheduled to cover all Masses *and may be asked on occasion to serve at a different Mass, Holy Days of Obligation, or events* deemed necessary by our Rector. You will be asked to provide your *preference* of Mass times. You will be scheduled through Ministry Pro, our ministry scheduling software. Su requests can be made through Ministry, as well.

Badges in Vesting Room

Ministers of Hospitality should pick up their badge from the Vesting Room upon arrival. Badges are provided by the church and *should be returned* once the usher duties have been completed at the end of Mass. Please remember to return your badge to the Vesting Room so it will be available the next time you serve.

Ministers of Hospitality/Usher Locations

1 or 2 ministers of hospitality should remain stationed at each entrance to the church throughout the Mass, once the Celebrant enters with the Deacons and Altar Servers. This is to be attentive to the needs of our parishioners entering late to find a seat, or to lend assistance throughout the Mass. It also assists the Celebrant in maintaining sacred silence. If ministers of hospitality wish to sit with family members during Mass, that is acceptable. Any deviations from procedures should be brought to the attention of the Hospitality Leader *prior to Mass* and appropriate arrangements made to not disrupt the Mass.

Procedures

Prior to Liturgy

- Arrive 20-30 minutes prior to start of the Mass. Check in with the Sacristan and Hospitality Leader for that Mass.
- Check off name and pick up badge.
- If you are the first to arrive, find out from the Hospitality Leader if any special arrangements are required, reserved seating, special guests, etc.
- Ask if there are any Diocesan or special collections.
- Ensure all doors are unlocked and offertory baskets are in place. If not unlocked, find the Hospitality Leader or Sacristan that has a key.
- Check to ensure bulletins are available and any other literature needing to be displayed or distributed at the conclusion of Mass.
- Check the pews to ensure there are sufficient Mass materials available. Inform the Hospitality Leader if anything is required to be refilled or missing.
- Assist with seating as needed. Direct parishioners to locations for wheelchairs and politely ask our parishioners with walkers if they would like to have the Eucharist brought to them. Inform the Hospitality Leader of the location of those who need the Eucharist brought to them prior to the start of Mass.
- The Hospitality Leader will ensure that gift bearers are chosen and given proper instruction of when to report to the rear of the church at the gift table. (The appropriate time is after the ushers have passed the center of the pews taking up the collection.)

Gathering Rite

Once the Celebrant enters the rear doors, it is appropriate that two Ministers of Hospitality close the main doors. Once the procession begins to move down the main aisle toward the altar, the doors may be opened for those arriving late by one Minister. Other Ministers of Hospitality can escort those arriving late to available seats. If anyone arrives after the Celebrant is standing in the sanctuary/ altar area and the opening hymn has concluded, please wait until the opening prayer has been completed before showing late arrivals to seats. Always attempt to fill outside of the main (center) aisle to limit disruptiveness during Mass.

Presentation of Gifts/Offertory

The Hospitality Leader is also responsible for either carrying up the large gift basket, or designating someone prior to the start of Mass, preferably from the family bringing up the gifts. Ministers of Hospitality may carry gifts to the altar if other parishioners are not available.

Sign of Peace

Once they have exchanged the Sign of Peace with their families, Ministers of Hospitality shall gather at the rear of the church, exchange the Sign of Peace with each other, and with parishioners at the back of the Church.

Communion Procession

When the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion ascend to the altar, Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers will proceed down each aisle. Once they have reached the front pew, they will bow to the altar and lead each pew in the Communion Procession. Once Ministers of Hospitality have processed to the back of the church and all pews are in line, they are to check the back rows to ensure everyone has had the opportunity to receive Communion. Then proceed to the end of the line to receive Communion, and to inform the Extraordinary Minister of parishioners in any part of the church still needing to receive the Eucharist (wheelchair, etc.).

Concluding Rite

After the “Final Blessing,” when the Priest or Deacon has concluded the Mass, all ministers of hospitality will proceed to the entrances of the church. Once the Celebrant has moved from the altar with his procession, and their backs are to the congregation, two ministers of hospitality will move to the exit doors to thank, greet, and distribute bulletins to parishioners as they leave.

At the 5:15 Vigil, 11:45 AM, and 6 PM Sunday Masses, after all parishioners and visitors have exited the Church, each Minister of Hospitality will do a quick walk of their respective area, checking the pews for anything left behind. If any items are found, turn them into the Hospitality Leader to be placed in Lost and Found in O’Brien Hall.

Special Situations

In case of Fire/Evacuation: All Ministers of Hospitality should familiarize themselves with the locations of fire extinguishers and fire alarms. If an emergency evacuation is needed, please ensure that those parishioners in wheelchairs or the elderly who are in need of assistance, are escorted to the nearest available exit.

First Aid/Medical Emergency Assistance: Ministers of Hospitality MUST be aware of potential problems. Our parish has many senior members who may need special assistance. If someone becomes ill, please help escort them to the bathroom, vestibule or outside. Parishioners will feel more at ease knowing there is someone nearby to help them should a problem or emergency arise.

- There are 2 AEDs located on the property – one at the back of the church outside the vesting room and one in the office lobby
- If someone collapses or passes out, DO NOT attempt to move them. The Hospitality Leader will call **911**.
- First Aid kits are available in the vesting room and Sacristy.
- Cleaning materials are available in the Sacristy, if needed.
- If law enforcement assistance is deemed necessary, call the following number from the telephone located in the Sacristy or your cell phone.
 - o **Consolidated Dispatch – 606-5800**

Minister of Hospitality/Usher Interest Form

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____	Retired (Y) __ (N) __
Address _____	
Phone (Hm) _____	Cell _____ Wk _____
Email _____	Will you regularly check email (Y)__(N)__
Do you prefer email of schedules or hard copy? Email __ Paper __	

Mass preferences: Please choose Masses at which you are willing to participate as a Minister of Hospitality/usher, numbering priorities (1), (2) or (3). Are you willing to serve at more than one Mass per week at a different time? (Y) __ (N) __
Will you serve Weekly ____ Bi-Weekly ____ Monthly ____
Saturday 5:15pm ____ Sunday 8:30am ____ Sunday 10am ____ Sunday 11:45am ____
Sunday 6pm Student Mass ____

Do you know of a family member or friend who would be interested in serving in this ministry?

Name(s) _____

Phone(s) _____

Email(s) _____

Please return completed form to a Minister of Hospitality, drop in collection basket or bring to the Parish Office. **THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR OUR PRIESTS, PARISH, AND COMMUNITY.** God Bless!