

# St. Francis-by-the-Sea

## USHER MINISTRY

### COMMITMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

*MINISTRY PROMISE: SHOW CHRIST'S LOVE FOR ALL; DEMONSTRATE EVERYONE IS WELCOME; HOPE ALL DEPART FEELING COMMENDABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE HERE.*

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ATTEND A ONE-ON-ONE TRAINING SESSION; COMMIT TO AT LEAST FOUR, AND NOT MORE THAN SIX MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS PER YEAR.

CAPTAINS FOR EACH MASS INSURE A FULL COMPLEMENT OF USHERS AT EVERY LITURGY AND FOSTER UNIFORMITY BY SUPPORTING ALL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES.

AN USHER WHO BECOMES UNABLE TO FULFILL AN ASSIGNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING A REPLACEMENT, AND THEN NOTIFYING THE USHER CAPTAIN.

WE USE THE INTERNET AND TELEPHONE TO BE INFORMED AND STAY CURRENT.

DRESS CODES FOR ALL MASSES ARE THE SAME. USHER BADGES ARE WORN BY ALL. BLUE BLAZER IS REQUIRED FOR MEN. BLUE OR BLACK JACKET IS REQUIRED FOR WOMEN.

ARRIVE ABOUT 20 MINUTES BEFORE MASS BEGINS. ALWAYS CHECK ON/DISCUSS SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WITH FELLOW USHERS.

(Jan 2013)

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1. Procedures related to doors.

a. Piazza (outside) Doors. Remain closed and are not locked open by ushers. Greeters & individuals open and close Piazza Doors. Ushers do not open Piazza Doors; if these doors have been left open, make sure they are closed.

b. Narthex (inside) Doors. Remain closed, except when the celebrant approaches during recessional (see 7a).

c. Side (outside) Doors. Remain closed and are not locked open by ushers. Individuals open and close side doors when they enter or depart.

2. Presenting Offerings of the Faithful (Gifts).

a. Prior to Mass, center aisle ushers secure and instruct a couple or family to present the offerings of the faithful. Presenters leave their pew and move to the rear aisle when ushers walk down their aisles to begin Collection. Holding the gifts, the Presenters immediately take their position in the center aisle at last pew. Presenters begin walking to the Celebrant when he begins to move toward center aisle to receive the gifts. Usually (not always), the Cross bearer leads presenters down the aisle.

3. Seating assistance: objective and guidelines. The objective is to minimize any distraction during the Liturgy of the Word when assisting those who arrive after Mass begins. There are three (3) seating- assist options.

a. Remain in the rear aisle and direct individuals to open pews.

b. Meet individuals in the rear aisle and escort them to open pews. When escorting, the usher politely informs those seated of the number of fellow worshipers coming into their pew. Usher returns to the rear aisle without waiting for everyone to be seated.

c. When there is a continuous flow of new arrivals, usher remains in the aisle standing next to an open pew, waiting for the worshipers to walk to you. Again, usher informs those seated of the number of fellow worshipers entering the pew before moving on to the next open pew. Use of fingers is an appropriate way to communicate the number of pew spaces. Waving your hand to beckon worshipers, however, is not appropriate in our church

d. Seating late arrivals. When the entrance hymn begins, ushers locate open pews to assist with seating as needed during the Introductory Rite. "May I help you locate a seat?" is appropriate. Seating people from the center aisle first is less distracting. Knowing God's presence on the altar during the Liturgy of the Word, ushers should stand in their rear aisle stations to listen to the readings – except when assisting late arrivals.

Ushers may direct or escort individuals to open pews until the First Reading. Ushers remain in the rear aisle through the readings, responsorial, gospel and homily. If necessary, late arrivals can be escorted to open pews during the singing of the responsorial or the singing of the Alleluia before the gospel.

Recalling the objective is to minimize distractions to all listening to the Word of God, ushers are asked to use "common sense" and judgment regarding the seating of those who arrival during the readings and homily. (i.e. Should a large build-up of people waiting to be seated occur, seating everyone after might also become a distraction. Use your judgment.)

#### 4. Count and report attendance.

a. The time to count mass attendance may vary by specific liturgy. Generally this is during the first or second reading. Usher Captains know the best time for their masses. Record the count for your section on the appropriate form. The goal is that worshipers do not notice usher using hands or fingers to count attendance

## 5. Offertory Collection.

a. Diocesan Guidelines. Before mass begins, ushers who take collections need to sign-in; sign-in form is printed on the same sheet as the mass count report. Ushers who carry and escort the Collections Basket should be identified. Guidelines prohibit the large Collections Basket be carried by the same person continuously and captains have rotation programs for their teams. Guidelines also stipulate one escort usher join the usher who carries and secures the Collections Basket in the safe. A plastic bag liner is used in our parish. Before mass, an identification card is placed inside bag liner and the liner is inserted in the large collections basket. Regular & Special collections are not comingled.

b. Collection. Collection begins with all ushers walking down their respective aisles to the front aisle and, bowing together. Collections are transferred into the large Collections Basket in the rear aisle, near the center, carried to the back sacristy via the side aisle and secured in the safe.

c. Special Collections. From time-to-time special collections will be taken. The special collections when distribution of Communion is finished, usually when the celebrant returns to his chair for meditation. Ushers walk in unison down their aisles to the front aisle, bow together and distribute baskets. Special collections are combined into a large Collections Basket and immediately secured in the back sacristy safe, in the same manner as the Offertory Collection.

## 6. The Communion Procession.

a. Objective: respectful, dignified and efficient flow of communicants. During Masses with large attendance, Holy Communion is also distributed in rear aisle. Most communicants look for direction at the Communion Procession.

b. Immediately after the celebrant receives the Eucharist and as he begins distribution to the Extraordinary Ministers, ushers walk in unison to their respective front aisle, bow together and then move into position to direct the procession for their sections. This varies slightly when Holy Communion is also received in the rear aisle. Captains know the best procedure for their mass.

c. Communion for those with mobility difficulties who are not in front pew. Extraordinary Ministers stationed at side aisles take Holy Communion to communicants unable to walk in the procession. The usher is the final person in the procession and after receiving, the usher should tell the EM there is a communicant in the pew; then, lead the EM to the pew. If known before mass, the usher should also mention this to an Extraordinary Ministers in narthex.

## 7. Manage Dismissal and Departure

a. Before dismissal (team captain knows best time for your mass).

Bulletins boxes are placed near the outside doors (not in the center of the aisle).

All ushers remain at the stations during the singing of the recessional hymn.

Center aisle ushers open narthex doors when the celebrant approaches.

b. Bulletins are not handed out after the recessional, when the celebrant arrives in the narthex. (Not before. People leaving early can take from the box.)

## 8. Ready church building for the next liturgy.

a. Before leaving assembly area, ushers inspect their sections, clearing pews of articles left and placing hymnals and missalettes in their proper positions. Bulletin boxes are returned to the Ministry Room. All doors (except confessional doors) are to be closed.

### Special Circumstances

1. Safe Environment policy
2. Lost and Found procedures
3. CPR & AED training
4. Special celebrations
5. When an usher uses a pew
6. Special liturgies (i.e. Ash Wednesday)
7. Reserving pews
8. Roping for blocking off pews
9. Cups for drinking water
10. Mass coordinator assistance
11. When to bow
12. When late arrivals are not seated.
13. Maintaining collection baskets
14. Unlocking & locking side doors
15. Hearing Devices
16. Masses/ liturgies in other buildings
17. Seating in pews reserved for people with handicaps or for liturgy ministers
18. When individual requires Emergency Medical Service
19. When someone in a pew faints or requires assistance
20. When someone on the altar requires assistance
21. Noise in the assembly area before and after mass.

