

## **Usher's Ministry Process and Procedures**

*St. Mark's Catholic Community Ushers are people who reflect the warmth and welcome of Christ himself. Always conscious of Christ's words: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me", Ushers are friendly people who are hospitable to all age groups and nationalities. The Usher ministry is open to all – women and men. Couples and families are encouraged to join this ministry.*

**Mission:** To promote a hospitable, sacred, safe and prayerful atmosphere for worship principally by maintaining and fostering sacred silence in the main body of the church. Ushers are to offer particular assistance to the disabled and the assembly in an orderly and safe way before, during, and after the liturgies. Ushers will maintain the security of the offertory and any confidential documents received.

**Appropriate Attire:** A neat and especially reverential appearance is in keeping with the usher's role as a visible example of reverence, welcome, and hospitality.

A. Men should wear collared shirt, dress slacks (no jeans, shorts or T-shirts). Sport coat and tie is preferred but not required.

B. Women should wear an appropriate dress of acceptable length or dress slacks. No sundresses.

Note: everything ushers do sets an example for other members of the parish. In addition, it is imperative that ushers are extremely aware of their surroundings and anything unusual taking place in the church that may require a "security" response.

**Scheduling:** The scheduling of Ushers is done based on Mass preference and is prepared by Gayle, the liturgy scheduler. In order to handle the necessary responsibilities a total of at least one Captain and three Ushers will be necessary for the 5:00 Saturday Vigil, the 8:30am, and 5:00 Sunday Masses. A total of at least one Captain and four Ushers will be necessary for the 11:00 Mass (one can focus more on security, especially during offertory and communion).

**Seating:** The proper place for seating of Ushers is at the back of church, near the main entrance, and at any location that provides a clear view of most entry/exit doors. Always being attentive to the needs of the faithful, they should sit or stand in those places which would enable them to best exercise their ministerial role and allow for optimal focus on safety.

## **PROCEDURES BEFORE THE LITURGY**

- Arrive at the church 15-20 minutes prior to the start of Mass to pick up your name badge and sign in.
- Verify basket for the children's collection is stationed by the baptismal font.
- Greet people as they enter the worship space. Do not congregate in the same place; spread out to all sets of doors in the worship space, especially the doors at the east side of the church where greeters may not be stationed. Make sure to keep any conversation reserved to the vestibule area and to preserve the silence of the main body of the church.
- Help others maintain a sense of reverence and quiet, especially in the back of the church when the doors are open to the vestibule. Be sensitive to the fact that some parishioners are trying to pray and prepare themselves for the celebration of the Mass.
- Assist with seating if necessary. Point out places for wheelchairs when appropriate.
- Select the gift bearers and give them any necessary instructions (unless the family signed up to receive the Vocations Chalice is present). Those chosen need to come up after the collection passes by their seat. We usually need 3 people minimum but families should be welcome to bring up the gifts. Gift Bearers must be dressed appropriately, no shorts, jeans, or T-shirts.
- Before, during, and after Mass avoid blocking the holy water fonts used by parishioners who are entering and leaving the sanctuary.

## **PROCEDURES DURING THE LITURGY**

### **Gathering Rite**

- Once the entrance procession is completed and the Presider greets the assembly; make sure the doors are closed between the vestibule and the worship area.
- It is appropriate that at least two or three Ushers stay in the back of the worship area during this time to inform people that we are waiting for the proper time for them to be seated.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

- During the Liturgy of the Word, to show respect for the Word of God among us, the following are the only appropriate times to allow people to find seats: Between the 1st reading and the Psalm, between the Psalm and the 2nd reading, following the 2nd reading, and following the reading of the Gospel.
- It is important to gently ask latecomers to remain in the back of the worship space until the appropriate pause so that they do not distract the assembly from their worship. (If it feels confrontational let them go in). Ushers should be stationed along the outer parameter of the assembly to help facilitate seating for latecomers and be aware of any safety concerns.

### **Preparation of the Gifts**

- Once the Prayers of the Faithful have concluded, and after the Children's Collection, the ushers will conduct the offertory. The Captain does not pass a basket. Instead, the Captain remains behind to watch for any safety or hospitality concerns. After distributing and gathering up the collection Ushers will go to the (see training version) area. The entire collection will be processed inside the (see training version) with two of the five ushers standing guard (see training version) until the offertory has been secured. There must always be at least two Ushers present when the offertory bags are being processed.
- The Altar server with the Cross, and Sacristan, will immediately come to the back to meet the family with the bread, wine and Vocations Chalice. They (except the Sacristan) will bring these items forward to the alter to present to the Deacon or Priest.

### **Concluding Rite**

During the dismissal, when the Presider leaves the sanctuary area, open the doors to the vestibule so that the procession can easily leave the worship area. Do not open the doors until the procession has started towards the back of the church. Opening them too early encourages parishioners to exit before the Mass has concluded.

### **PROCEDURES AFTER THE LITURGY**

- Captain and Ushers are expected to remain 5-10 minutes after the mass to hand out bulletins (at the east doors), and/or straighten up the pews.
- Two ushers should take the children's collection basket (by the baptismal font) into the (see training version) and separate offering money from promise slips. 830am ushers should place the collection in the burgundy bag in the (see training version). 11am ushers should combine that with money from their Mass and place the entire amount in (see training version). It should be bagged and labeled.
- Close the doors to form a sound barrier and a quieter place for those in the worship area who wish to pray.

### **Important Information That All Ushers Should Know**

- There is a first aid kit and an Automated Emergency Defibrillator (AED) located on the wall in the vestibule by the SW door. Ushers should verify they are in place before each Mass. There is a wheelchair that is kept in the back of the Recuperation Room and in the event a parishioner requires medical assistance during a Mass, assuming the parishioner is in condition to do so, the wheelchair should be used for transport. In certain instances a parishioner who takes ill during Mass should not be moved. An Usher should get the attention of a nurse or doctor in attendance while another usher calls 911. See below for more notes on medical events
- Registration forms and other resources are at the kiosk outside the office.
- Coffee and doughnuts are usually served after 8:30 and 11:00 Masses. During fall and winter months the Knights of Columbus serve a pancake breakfast, usually on the first Sunday of the month.
- Know where the parish phone number(s) and other contact info is located in the bulletin.
- Know where the extra Newsletters, Parish Directories, Pledge forms, information on our Church is located. (Some can be found on the table in the vestibule).

### **In case someone falls, passes out, or is otherwise injured in the church:**

- Determine what, if any injuries that person has. If the person appears to be in serious distress (broken bones, head injury, difficulty breathing, etc.), please call 911 immediately.
- If the person is alone at Mass, obtain the name and phone number of a friend or family member and call them to come and assist them or check on them later if they have declined medical aid on site.
- Notify Richard Kullick if any damage needs to be repaired. He can notify Sergio if there is a “mess” that needs cleaned up.

### ***Usher Ministry Leaders' Job Description***

Appoint Captains for each Mass; support all Captains.

Help to recruit and train ushers by personally asking suitable candidates and training them in person prior to the Mass. Thoroughly go over the Policy and Procedures document. Help Captains make sure all Ushers know their job description and follow through on it.

Will need to be familiar with key personnel, who does what, where, and why.(i.e. Parish Facilities Manager, Office Manager, Stewardship and Development Director, Liturgy and Music Director etc.

Need to be familiar with the parish schedule and liturgical schedules, good administrative and communication skills

Make sure we have adequate numbers of Ushers for each Mass and special services. Provide Scheduler with updates on new ushers and those who no longer serve.

Communicate with Liturgy Committee where pertinent information is concerned pertaining to the Usher Ministry. Actively recruit by identifying parishioners who have an interest and potential.

Communicate to Captains when Mass counts are needed and when special actions may be required.

Update the Usher's Job Description as needed.

### ***Captain's Job Description***

Supervise the demeanor and function of the Ushers for their particular Mass. Help to recruit and train new Ushers. Make sure all Ushers know and use the Usher Process and Procedures.

Reports to the Head Usher. Responsible for assigning ushers to each door and "sentinel" location making sure Ushers hand out bulletins after Mass, if needed.

The Captain is ultimately responsible for the security procedures at their assigned Mass.

Coordinate the offertory process.

Coordinate the process for counting attendance at Mass when requested.

Maintain a heightened level of awareness concerning safety and anything that doesn't look right.