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The Roman Catholic Community of  
**St. Cecilia**

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USHERS  
A MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

## THE MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY (USHERS)

The Church has various liturgical ministries established to serve the worshipping assembly. All those who serve in special roles are servants of the assembly; their task is to help the assembly fulfill its vital role in the liturgy.

Those who serve in this capacity have the potential to greatly add to or detract from the experience of worship for all who gather.

Ushers serve the assembly in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most important can be summed up in the word hospitality. The usher may be the first person worshippers meet when they arrive at church. The usher has the opportunity and responsibility to represent the rest of the assembly in offering hospitality.

A person's impression of a parish is significantly shaped by the presence or absence of a welcoming atmosphere when they come to worship. Offering a smile and a word of welcome can have a profound impact on people as they arrive, especially if they are visitors to St. Cecilia's Church.

Like the Good Shepherd, Ushers help guide the people of God on the pilgrim journey.

Like the Good Shepherd, Ushers reveal God's love in our midst and help us all become more aware of that love.

*May the Good Shepherd  
give our Ushers  
strength and wisdom  
as they serve the Church  
in his name.*

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS MINISTRY

### **Before The People Arrive**

As ministers of the Church, Ushers should be dressed appropriately.

Usher should be in the Narthex no later than ten (10) minutes prior to the start of Mass.

When you arrive at church each week, give the entire worship space an examination. Are there bulletins, tissues or other debris littering the pews? Are all kneelers up so that people can enter the pews easily?

Are there leaves or blossoms that have fallen off plants and need to be removed?

Usher should clean up, fix up and set up for the next Liturgy.

Check that the collection baskets are in the designated places, and that the weekly Bulletins removed from the cardboard box they came in and are neatly stacked on the tables in the Narthex.

## **As The Assembly Gathers**

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Greet those coming to attend Mass. (A simple “smile” goes a long way!)

Open doors, assist those who are in need of assistance, e.g. the elderly, those with small children, or others with special needs

Be willing to direct people to the rest rooms.

Be good stewards of the energy needed to heat or air-condition our church. Make sure doors are not left open, allowing the heat or air-conditioning to escape to the outside.

## Gift Bearers

Prior to Mass the ushers are to choose individuals to be the Gift Bearers for the Offertory Procession. This should be done well in advance so that the invitation and directions are not taking place as the Gathering Procession is forming or just prior to the Procession with the Gifts.

Care should be taken that the same individuals are not selected too frequently.

While families certainly can be included, the gifts can also be presented by single people, by teenagers, by older parishioners, or by any combination.

## **As Mass Begins**

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Once the Gathering Song begins, the Hospitality Ministers should direct all individuals to be seated in the pews.

Once the Gathering Song concludes, ushers should discretely assist latecomers to available seating in the church.

## **The Offertory and Preparation of Gifts**

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Following the Universal Prayer, after the congregation is seated and during the singing of the Offertory Song the ushers will distribute the collection baskets

The ushers are to proceed down the aisles to the sanctuary. When they reach the end of the aisle they are to bow to the Altar, then give a collection basket to the first person in the first pews. Then immediately proceed to the 7<sup>th</sup> pew from the front and give a basket to the first person in the 7<sup>th</sup> pews. The individuals pass the basket from one to another and then to the next pew, who in turn passes it to the next person.

After the collection baskets have been passed among the congregation, the ushers are to collect the baskets and empty the contents into the locking bag, lock the bag, and then put the bag into the slot in the sacristy. *By Diocesan Policy, this must be done by two ushers (this is for safety and security reasons.)*

Those chosen as the gift bearers will gather to the right of the main entrance of the narthex of the church. Ushers are to instruct the gift bearers to bring the gifts to the presider. The “Prayer Requests” Box is to be placed on the table stand next to the Altar, with the writing on the front of the box facing the congregation.

### **The Communion Rite**

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Just before the distribution of Holy Communion, the ushers should proceed to the front pew of each aisle and assist the congregation to approach Holy Communion in an orderly fashion. Be particularly sensitive and helpful to those with special needs that may require special care.

Should someone be unable to walk up for Holy Communion, please let them know that someone will bring the Eucharist to them in the pew. If the ushers would please receive Holy Communion last, and then ask the priest or other Minister to bring the Eucharist down to those in need.

### **The Final Blessing and Dismissal**

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The church doors *should not* be opened in anticipation of the end of Mass. (This only serves to encourage people to leave Mass early.) Parish bulletins should be distributed as people exit at the conclusion of the Mass..

A polite “good evening” or “have a good day” as people exit is always a welcome gesture, and extends the hospitality that we have tried to communicate during the entire liturgy.

### **One last word...**

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THANK YOU for your willingness to be a Minister of Hospitality. The service you offer to our people should never be underestimated. We appreciate the time and gifts you share with our community.