



USHER MINISTRY GUIDE

***HOSPITALITY:
GOD'S LOVE MADE VISIBLE***

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Thank You!

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:1 – 9

Thank you for your willingness to serve as an usher. The usher assumes the attitude of radical hospitality; where the parishioners and guests are made to feel welcome and comfortable as they gather for the Eucharistic celebration. Our ushers can see the presence of Christ in each person as they arrive.

History

The ministry of ushers is the oldest lay ministry in the Catholic Church. The ushers of today have descended from a long line of people of God who have gone before them. During the time of Christ, the doorkeepers of the temple numbered in the hundreds and were the forerunners of today’s ushers. The more immediate predecessor of today’s usher can be found in the clerical order of porter, instituted in the third century A.D. During those times, it was the duty of the porters or ushers to guard the door of the church against any intruders who might disturb the service. The porter duties were so important that they came to be included in the rite of ordination, where they were specified as “to ring the bells, open the church and sacristy, and open the book for the preacher.” In 1972 Pope Paul VI abolished the order of porter and this important task was given over to the laity. While today’s ushers do not ring the bells or open the book, their primary duties and responsibilities include greeting and welcoming parishioners as they enter the church, helping them to find seats, and taking up the collection.

Ushers are Liturgical Ministers

Ushers must be mindful that they are there to assist those who are preparing to worship God by creating a quiet and reverent atmosphere within the church. Ushers assure the comfort of the assembly in the worship space and perform various functions during the liturgy. One of the most important duties that the usher has is that of hospitality. The usher is one of the first ministers that worshipers meet when they arrive at church. The usher has the opportunity and the responsibility to represent the rest of the assembly in offering hospitality. People’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.

Eligibility

Those wishing to serve as ushers must be registered parishioners of St Catherine Laboure Parish. Adult men and women, and freshman-senior year HS students are welcome to apply to join the usher ministry.

Expectations

Always be attentive to the needs of the faithful. Sit in areas of the church close to the place where you will perform your duties. Ushers are part of the worshipping community. As such, they are to participate fully in the singing, responding, and prayer in the liturgy.

- Dress should be appropriate and neat. (No t-shirts, shorts, or jeans)
- Be conscious of people with disabilities or those who cannot come forward to receive Holy Communion.
- Assist those who request “loop” equipment or large text missalettes.
- Be prepared for emergencies:
 - know the position of the fire extinguisher and the location of fire exits
 - know the location of the first aid kit
 - know the location of the telephone to contact 911 during a medical emergency
 - know the location of the defibrillator and how to use it
 - take note of nurses or doctors in attendance in case you need to call on them for help
- If you will not be at your scheduled Mass, please use Schedule Ministry Pro to arrange a substitute.
- The Usher Ministry Coordinator will check the Schedule Ministry Pro every Wednesday to ensure coverage for the weekend. If there are openings on the schedule it is his responsibility to solicit replacements.

Duties and Responsibilities

Arrival Responsibilities

- Arrive 20 minutes before Mass begins, (head usher arrives 30 minutes before Mass begins).
- Check in with the head usher and be sure your name tag is displayed in a prominent place so you can easily be identified.
- Offer a warm, friendly welcome to the faithful as they gather for worship. (Good morning, good afternoon, hi etc.)
- Be prepared to direct guests to the restrooms or the cry room if a baby needs to be changed
- Ushers should avoid congregating in only one area of the church, as well as speaking with their fellow ministers to the exclusion of those who are gathering for the liturgy
- Escort latecomers to any available (open) pew.
 - If the readings have begun, ask latecomers to wait at the back of the church until after the reading is finished and then assist them to find seats.
 - Once the entrance procession begins the inner doors of the church should be closed.

Offertory Responsibilities

- Before Mass begins and as people are entering church, please pick a family or individuals and invite them to bring up the water and wine cruets, the ciboria containing the hosts, and the small pyx (if it is present) to the altar during the offertory procession.
- During the prayers of the faithful, the ushers should come to the back of the church, get their sticks, and position themselves at their designated places. After the closing prayer of the prayers of the faithful, the ushers then proceed down the center and side aisles immediately.
- At the foot of the altar, the ushers should reverently bow their heads or genuflect and then begin the collection.
- After the collection is completed, the ushers should quickly consolidate the money into the basket indicated by the sacristan. If there is a second collection the procedure is repeated.
- Once the collection is complete, the head usher and one other usher will proceed to the sacristy, put the collection in the appropriate collection bag, seal it and deposit it in the safe.
- The head usher then signs the collection sheet.
- The ushers may return to their seats.

Communion Responsibilities

- Ushers must be alert to identify those parishioners who, due to medical or other reasons are unable to come forward to receive communion. In such instances, the usher will be responsible for identifying the parishioner(s) to an extraordinary minister to ensure they receive communion.
- The ushers should be the last in line to receive Communion.

Dismissal Responsibilities

- Just before the recessional procession begins prop open the inner doors. The outer doors will be held open by the ushers as parishioners exit.
- Hand out bulletins as people leave and say a word of appropriate farewell. (Have a good day, enjoy the rest of your day, have a good week etc.)

After most people have left, walk through the church, and pick up anything that may have been left behind, make sure trash is picked up, kneelers are up, and books are in the appropriate racks and facing the correct direction in each pew. If you come across a broken kneeler, please let the sacristan know so maintenance can be alerted.

Scriptural Relevance

Hospitality was at the heart of the Jewish scriptures and was highly valued by Jesus. Jesus told stories of feasts and banquets, was very relaxed in the company of public sinners, and experienced the hospitality of many including Martha and Mary, celebrated Passover with his friends, and rescued a newly married couple from poor hospitality.

- Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me; and those who welcome me, welcome the one who sent me (Matthew 10:40).
- For I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25: 31, 34, 35).
- The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45).
- In the parable of the great feast, Jesus invites the poor, crippled, blind, and lame to share in the banquet (Luke 14:14-22).
- Love one another with mutual affection. Anticipate one another in showing respect (Romans 12:10).

Some Theological Considerations

Hospitality plays a vital role in creating a sense of community for worship. A person who feels welcomed and valued is more likely to enter wholeheartedly into the celebration of the liturgy and to return as a member of the parish community. A friendly and welcoming usher can make God's love apparent to people as they arrive.

- Christ is present in a four-fold way in the Eucharist:
 1. In the Eucharist where He gives us His body and blood
 2. In the proclaimed Word of God
 3. In the priest as presider
 4. In the assembled persons at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

When people gather on Sunday for the Mass, it is not as a group of people praying individually, but rather as a group involved as a community of worshippers. The faithful pray together. It is their prayer. Ushers are the first ministry of those gathering to celebrate communal prayer.

- Ushers take the time and effort to be attentive to those who are gathering by acknowledging their presence and speaking to them. This personal contact helps each person, especially newcomers or visitors, feel welcome.
- The essence of hospitality is the quality of 'being present'. The invitation to relationship can transform a group of individuals into a dynamic community.
- Everything the people do in a parish (e.g., every gathering that occurs) affects the formation, growth or decline of the community. New growth happens and new things are born in a parish where ushers treat people as guests at a family table and are nurtured.
- Although all the assembled are responsible for hospitality, ushers are called to set an example for the assembly.
- Though Christ is the host of the liturgy, the usher's role is that of Christ's hands and feet, the living Body of Christ; someone whose presence, conversation and actions speak a genuine desire that all, who come to the liturgical event, enjoy their time together.

Laity Oversight & Recruiting

Usher Ministry Coordinator

Ongoing laity oversight will be the responsibility of the Usher Ministry Coordinator (UMC). The UMC will untimely be responsible to the Parish Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries and the Pastor. The UMC will be responsible for the following:

- Weekly usher assignments via the use of Ministry Scheduling Pro
- Recruiting and training of new ushers
- Usher compliance with Parish and Diocesan guidelines
- UMC will serve for two (2) years

Assistant Usher Ministry Coordinator & Head Ushers & Ushers

The Assistant Usher Coordinator (AUMC) will assist the UMC and then resume responsibilities of the UMC. The AUMC will also be responsible for recruiting the next AUMC. A head usher will be designated for each mass time and will serve 2 years and then a replacement will take over. Ushers will serve for a one-year term renewable each year.

Training and Installation

Training sessions for new ushers will be held as needed to be determined by the UMC in consultation with the Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries. Training will include thorough knowledge of the sections of this manual titled “expectations through dismissal”. Having appropriate knowledge and training will help ministers to function effectively and bring confidence and joy to their experience. It is most appropriate that ushers be commissioned for their role during a mass celebrated by the Pastor and in accord with the rite found in the Book of Blessings, chapter 62, an “Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians, Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and Ushers”.

Clearances

To serve in the usher ministry all clearances must be up to date. Initial education in the Safe Environment Program will be provided through Virtus prior to beginning service. Educational updates must be completed no less than once every three years. The following information will assist the prospective usher in completing the required clearances. Please see below:

STEPS TO BECOME SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANT

For Ushers & Greeters

Please follow the following steps: See below for details

1. Register with the Diocesan Database
2. Obtain PA Child Abuse History Clearance
3. Obtain Fingerprint Waiver or FBI fingerprints Waiver: If you have lived in the state of Pennsylvania for more than 10 consecutive years, please execute for the Waiver Form (see below). Please print the form, sign it and return to your Safe Environment Coordinator (Marcella Lantzman: mlantzman@sja-stl.org)

Or

Fingerprinting: If you have lived in the state of Pennsylvania for less than 10 consecutive years, you will need to be fingerprinted. Please complete the following steps out lined below

4. Complete Protecting God's Children Workshops Online

Since you will **NOT** be directly supervising children complete the training module *Protecting God's Children® Online Awareness Session 3.0* online. **This will take about 1 hour.**

STEPS TO BECOME SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANT

1. Register with the Diocesan Database



Please [click HERE](#) to access the online application.

The access code is **protect**. This code is needed to create a username and password.

The application will walk you through all of the steps needed to be fully safe environment compliant.

For step-by-step instructions for the application, [click HERE](#)

2. PA Child Abuse History Clearance



This clearance will need to be renewed every 5 years. You can print the registration at the end to keep for your records.

Online Application: Please [click HERE](#) to access the online application. Once on the *PA Child Welfare Information Solution* website, follow these steps to complete the application:

- Click on CREATE INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNT
- Enter a Keystone ID – this is your username
- After completing the first page, you will receive an email with a temporary password. Follow the instructions to continue completing the application.

3. FBI fingerprints or Fingerprint Waiver



Waiver: If you have lived in the state of Pennsylvania for more than 10 consecutive years, please [click HERE](#) for the Waiver Form. Please print the form, sign it and return to your Safe Environment Coordinator.

Or

Fingerprinting: If you have lived in the state of Pennsylvania for less than 10 consecutive years, you will need to be fingerprinted. Please complete the following steps:

- *Register* – Complete the online registration and set-up an appointment to be fingerprinted.

The Service Code to get started is *1KG6ZJ*

- *Payment* – There will be a fee of approximately \$22.60. You can pay this at the registration location. They accept credit cards (name on the credit card must match the name on the registration), money order or business check.
- *Photo Identification* – You will choose a type of identification during the registration process. This id must be provided at the fingerprint location.
- *Locations* – During the registration process, you will be able to see and select a location that is convenient for you.
- *Results* – Once you receive your results/letter, please provide a copy to your Safe Environment Coordinator.

4. Protecting God's Children Workshops



Online training: If you choose to complete the training online, please [click HERE](#). The following are answers to some registration questions:

- Select your organization: Pittsburgh, PA (Diocese)
- Primary location: Saint Catherine Laboure Parish
- Please select the session you wish to attend: Scroll to the bottom to click Protecting God's Children for Adults (Online Training). The online training is available in English and Spanish.
- This is a series of workshop/training modules on child sexual abuse available by accessing your registered account at VIRTUS

If you are NOT directly supervising children complete the training module *Protecting God's Children® Online Awareness Session 3.0* online. **This will take about 1 hour.**