

GUIDELINES FOR USHERS

Ushers are entrusted with promoting a sense of welcoming and belonging to all the people assembled for Mass. By fostering a welcoming atmosphere, ushers take an active role in enabling each person to come to a greater experience of God while at Mass. The Ministry of Ushers is a service to the Church and should be treated seriously and with dignity.

The following qualities will help ushers see Jesus in the people who come to Mass: patience, reverence, sensitivity, compassion, understanding, and gentleness. Ushers are to be courteous and respectful at all times and observe quiet reverence while talking to people, especially before and during Mass.

Preparation

1. Pray.
2. Seek Christ in everyone.
3. Embrace the Parish Mission Statement.

Before Mass Begins

- ♦ Ushers should arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins and be seated in a place which allows them easy access to their various responsibilities.
- ♦ Every usher should wear an usher pin. If an usher should happen to leave with a pin, he should return it the next time he attends Mass.
- ♦ There is no dress code for ushers. However, ushers should remember that they represent St. Rita Church to parishioners and visitors.
- ♦ If there is limited seating, such as for Christmas and Easter Masses, ushers should offer to find seats for late arrivals and lead them to the available seats.
- ♦ In the event someone is in distress, such as a coughing spell, ushers should quietly offer their assistance. Cough drops, a pitcher of water, and paper cups are available in the foyer.

Collection Procedures

The first collection is taken up when the priest sits down after the General Intercessions. Ushers should already be in their positions at this time. After the first collection is taken up, the contributions are placed in a bag, the bag is then sealed and placed in the basket. One usher brings up the basket and hands it to the priest. The usher then bows and returns to his pew.

The second collection is taken up when the priest sits down after the distribution of Holy Communion. Ushers should be in their positions at this time. The second collection bag is prepared as the first collection bag is. An usher then brings the bag up the side aisle and stands next to the first pew until Mass is over. At the end of Mass, he opens the side door before going into the sanctuary. He places the bag in the basket and then puts the basket in the small closet in the sacristy.

After Mass Ends

The ushers open the front inner and outer doors as the priest prepares to leave the sanctuary at the end of Mass. After people have left the church, an usher closes the side door while other ushers close the inner and outer doors.

The ushers should take a quick walk down the aisles to collect any items left in the pews. Personal items should be placed in the lost and found area in the foyer. Missalettes and pew cards should be returned to the book racks and straightened out. Bulletins should be returned to the table.

In Addition

Ushers should be familiar with the location of the restrooms, first aid equipment, fire extinguishers, confessional room, and cry room. They should also be familiar with evacuation procedures.

On special occasions, such as the Easter Vigil Mass, the priest may give additional instructions to the ushers.

In Conclusion

Ushers are to remember that they may be the first persons to interact with people as they arrive and the last persons as people leave. Their friendliness and helpfulness can go a long way in leaving people with a good impression.

An Usher's Prayer

Lord, in Your love You gather Your people this day, help me to serve them in a Christ-like manner, even as Your Son Jesus served those who gathered around Him. Make me prayerful, patient, helpful, and understanding. May I radiate the joy that faith brings as I serve their needs. Give me Your strength to support my fellow ministers. May all who assemble to celebrate our faith in the Risen Savior be glad of heart for being here and for encountering Your Son in one another, in the priest, through the readings and Holy Communion, and through the ministry of ushers like me. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.