

HOSPITALITY: (Greeters, Ushers, Gift Bearers)

Hospitality was very important in the Ancient Middle East, a land for the most part, that was semi-arid to stark barren desert. Abraham graciously and generously welcomed the three strangers (understood to be God and two angels in human form) and he and Sarah were rewarded with a son despite their old age. St. Paul praised communities that welcomed travelers, especially those “Prophets” in the New Testament, who proclaimed Christ Jesus.

Since the Church is the family of God, the “front line” ministry is the ministry of hospitality. This ministry is exercised first of all by the assembly itself. More specifically, the ministers of hospitality greet the brothers and sisters of the community of faith, and especially newcomers, visitors, and those who need assistance, in a warm and friendly manner as they arrive for Mass or other liturgical celebrations. Throughout the Mass, they attend to the needs of the household of God in a familial and gracious way. In fulfilling this ministry, ministers of hospitality exercise the hospitality of God, who is the host of the Eucharistic Feast.

GREETERS

Greeters are builders of community; they are ambassadors of the parish community by welcoming fellow parishioners and visitors to the Mass and other liturgical celebrations on behalf of the parish community.

- Ideally, a greeter is able to welcome all fellow parishioners by name, and visitors by introducing themselves and asking their names and where they are from.
- Greeters should invite everyone to fellowship after Mass to build community and Christian fellowship.
- In parishes where there is no schedule of gift bearers, it may fall to greeters to invite members of the parish or even visitors to serve as gift bearers.

Extract taken from:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson



Nelson Diocese Liturgy Committee

USHERS

The Ministry of Ushers is one of particular service to the parish community. It helps the community to celebrate with ease and decorum. Ushers serve as representatives of the Church. They answer questions and concerns from parishioners and visitors attending the Church and provide assistance where needed.

- After people have been greeted at the entrance to the church, an usher may help them find a suitable pew especially if the church is already quite full or the person is a visitor.
- Ushers provide direction to the different locations of the church, i.e., washrooms, confessionals, etc.
- In the wintertime, the ushers may need to show where outer garments may be hung and boots placed.
- In most parishes, ushers facilitate gathering up the Offertory collection and securing it in the basket / bag used for that purpose, as well as any secondary collections for special events / causes.
- The ushers organize the Offertory procession and one of them may take part by carrying the collection basket / bag (or this may be done by another parish member in accord with the parish's established custom).
- At the end of the Mass, according to parish custom, the ushers may give out copies of the parish bulletin as the faithful leave the church.
- An usher may be responsible for emergency situations in the parish:
 - Calling for an ambulance
 - Finding a wheelchair, a nurse or a doctor in the assembly who can assist a person in need.
 - Knowing where the fire extinguishers, the defibrillator (if one is on site), and emergency exits are.
 - Assisting with evacuating the Church or other parish facilities.

GIFT BEARERS

It is appropriate that the gifts of bread and wine to be used in this celebration of the Eucharist, are brought forward in procession by representative members of the congregation. They are symbolic of the gift of themselves and all present, who will join with Christ's once and for all sacrifice, the gift of Himself upon the Cross. "Even money or other gifts for the poor or the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the Church, are acceptable; given their purpose, they are to be put in a suitable place away from the Eucharistic table." (cf. *GIRM* #73)

- Gift Bearers need to be taught the seriousness and dignity of bringing forth the gifts.
- The celebrant may receive this offering (collection) and give it to a server to be placed in the suitable place, or the person carrying it may take it directly to that place.
- If there is no schedule of Gift Bearers, an usher should be designated to arrange for the Gift Bearers before Mass begins.
- The Gift Bearers are not part of the procession or the recession.
- The Gift Bearers return to their places in the pews after bringing the gifts to the altar.