

## **USHERS GUIDELINES**

### **Practical Suggestions**

1. Be at your best. Look pleasant. Check your attire.
2. Be there. Remember that God's people need you and are depending on you.
3. Arrive early, at 1 hour before the time of the service. Give a moment of silent prayerful preparation for your ministry. Arrange all those things that need to be readied such as the collection baskets.
4. Be on hand to greet the people as they arrive. Make your first word a word of welcome. Keep on the lookout for the elderly, Elderly may need special attention.

A warm smiles, friendly courtesy, and gentle concern that should characterize all ushers' contacts with members of the assembly (qualities most often silent, unobtrusive, inconspicuous, and therefore unnoticed) are powerful aids toward making the Mass a true festivity.

Kindness is the rule; understanding is the principle.

People are people; each is unique and all kinds make up the People of God. There are teenagers: sometimes thoughtless, often bored or even rebellious. There are elderly: hard of hearing or lame. Young adults with growing family and infants in arms are there, too. All have special needs to which ushers are called to minister with the unfailing kindness people rightly expect from servants of the Church.

Ushers' deep concern for the assembly as a whole and for their ministry of facilitating the common task of prayer and action has to be balanced by sensitivity to people's feelings and the personal needs of individuals. This calls for that "gentle graciousness" which St. Paul so highly recommends to the Philippians, "Your kindness should be known to all' (Phil 4:5). It goes by many names, all of which speak to ushers. It is patience and forbearance, tolerance and magnanimity; it is that "splendor of charity" called kindness.

### **Before the Entrance Song**

Ushers greet the people as they come in and lead them to the seats to be seated. Ushers request the people to move toward the center of the seats so that empty spaces are left near the aisles for latecomers and those of health reasons. Ushers request any people (especially the teenagers) standing in the back of the worship space to occupy the vacant seats.

When you lead people up the aisle, walk slowly or you will lose them. Do not merely point to a seat, but lead people there personally.

When it is time for the celebration to begin allow last-minute arrivals to take care of themselves, cease all movement and go to your stations.

### **During the Entrance Song and Opening Prayer While All Are Standing**

People coming in at these times are latecomers\*.

Ushers lead latecomers stand at the back of the worship space.

While late arrivals should always be treated kindly, ushers may stop late arrivals from disturbing the singing, praying, reflecting assembly by standing firmly at the foot of the aisle and request quietly that they wait for the earliest opportunity to be seated.

If someone insists on entering during the liturgy, there is not much you can do. Trying to stop them would create more of a disturbance than their entry would. Generally, however, a gentle request in a positive tone will be effective.

The earliest opportunity for latecomers to be seated is after the opening prayer while all are being seated before the first reading.

Leading people to the available seats is generally more effective than just pointing them in the right direction.

\*Latecomers – except reason of health.

### **During the First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading, and Gospel While All Are Seated**

People coming in at these times are latecomers\*.

The next opportunity for latecomers to be seated is at the preparation of gifts.

### **During the Communion Procession**

Communion Procession of the faithful is a 'full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations' while queuing is not. We need to remind ourselves from time to time that we do not simply join a queue to receive communion. We take part, with other members of the faith assembly, in a procession to the Lord's Table.

Ushers may avoid queuing of the faithful by standing firmly at the foot of the pews at the centre aisles.

Request the faithful quietly to remain in their seats and wait for directions of the ushers when to stand for procession.

### **At Other Times**

There should be no movement in the aisles. Movement always attracts attention, and nothing the usher does should ever distract from praying, listening, reflecting assembly.

### **... DO'S ...**

All catholic are taught to genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament when entering and leaving the church.

If there is a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament genuflect whenever passing in front of the tabernacle.

This is how a proper genuflection is made:

1. Genuflections always begin in a standing position facing the tabernacle. You do not genuflect while moving.

2. With hands folded, eyes looking at the tabernacle, bring your right leg back about half a step, then, bend your right knee to the floor even with the heel of your left foot, body erect.
3. Pause briefly, then, rise to the original standing position, feet together.
4. Proceed with the next action.

A profound bow is made before the altar. A profound bow is made from the waist with hands folded. The shoulders and head are bent forward at about a 30 degree angle. It should be made slowly and reverently.