

Liturgy Handbook for

Hospitality/Usher Ministers

St. Pius X Catholic Church

A Prayer for Ministers of Hospitality

Lord Jesus, you welcomed all who came into your presence. Give me your eyes, ears and heart for the people I will encounter in this ministry. Remove from me anything that would block your light. Keep me focused on serving in Your name, seeing the face of Christ in every person who enters these doors. As people enter to worship, let them hear your voice in my words and see your love in my actions. May my welcome reflect joy and my goodbye encourage them to return. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

“The sacred liturgy is at the center, at the heart, of the life of the Church. It gives life to the Church. It builds up the Mystical Body of Christ. It manifests the nature of the Church. It empowers the Church to carry out her mission.” | Cardinal Francis Arinze

THE MOST IMPORTANT thing that we do as Catholics is celebrating the Holy Mass! It is through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, that the Lord breathes life into the Church and fashions the Church and each Christian more fully into the image of Jesus Christ. By virtue of baptism in Christ, every Catholic is called to participate in the Mass in a **“full, conscious and active”** way, as demanded by the Second Vatican Council (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, #14). Does that mean that everyone should take on a ministry in the Mass? **No!** Pope John Paul II clarified this when he said: “Active participation certainly means that, in gesture, word, song and service, all the members of the community take part in an act of worship, which is anything but inert or passive. **Yet active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it.**” (*Ad Limina Address to Bishops of the United States*, 1998). By attentively listening, singing, saying the responses, and entering into prayerful silence each of us does in fact fulfill the mandate of the Second Vatican Council. But some of the faithful are also **called upon to fulfill various liturgical roles** and so **assist the entire assembly** in entering more fully into the mysteries being celebrated. “The faithful, moreover, should not refuse to serve the People of God gladly whenever they are asked to perform some particular ministry or function in the celebration” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, #97).

THE ROLE OF HOSPITALITY IN THE SACRED LITURGY

1. The Ministry of Hospitality: Mission & History

Our Mission

Ministers of Hospitality are the face of St. Pius X Parish. Your mission is to create a sacred space of belonging, warmth, and safety, preparing hearts to hear the Word of God and receive the Eucharist. The ministry of hospitality is critical to creating a vibrant Sunday experience. Everyone who walks through our doors should be greeted and warmly welcomed as though it were Christ himself. People who leave the Church often say that they didn’t feel welcome, no one knew or called them by their name, and the Sunday experience was cold.

Although all of the assembled are responsible for hospitality, Ministers of Hospitality are called to set an example for the assembly.

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).
- *Do not neglect to show hospitality, for by that means some have entertained angels without knowing it* (Hebrews 13:2).

2. Core Principles of Hospitality

To move from "functional ushering" to "intentional hospitality," practice these four habits at every Mass:

- The 10-Foot Rule: Smile and make eye contact with anyone within 10 feet of you.
- The 5-Foot Rule: Offer a warm vocal greeting to anyone within 5 feet: "*Good morning! Welcome to St. Pius, it is so good to see you today!*"
- Active Awareness: Watch for unfamiliar faces, people looking around unclearly, or families with young children. Give them your full, unhurried attention.
- Sacred Focus: Once stationed at the doors, refrain from socializing with other ministers. Your focus belongs entirely to the arriving faithful.

3. Practical Procedures

Prior to Mass (Arrival & Preparation)

- Arrival: **Arrive at least 20 minutes before Mass begins.**
- Check-In: Sign in on the schedule outside the Sacristy, put on your nametag, and verify if there is a second collection or other irregular circumstances (visiting priest/Bishop, procession or something after Mass).
- Environment Check: Ensure all entrance doors are unlocked and outer door opened (if weather is nice), interior church doors are closed to maintain a prayerful sanctuary atmosphere, and the gathering space stays relatively quiet.
- Resource Readiness: Confirm bulletins are stocked at both entryways. If missing, check with a staff member. Sometimes bulletins arrive late and are in the office or outside mailbox (which has a key located in the office).

- If you see someone waiting for the bathroom, tell them there is another bathroom by the office if they would like to go there.

Stationing & Seating Support

- Exterior Doors: At least one minister props open the main south exterior door, greeting people and assisting anyone with mobility needs.
- Sanctuary Entrances: Two ministers stand at the inside gathering space doors, and one minister stands at the East door.
- Accessibility Care: Proactively assist those using walkers or wheelchairs. Offer to coordinate with the Priest or EMs to have the Eucharist brought directly to their pew if desired.
- Hospitality Ministers should sit in the back row. Their families can sit with them.

Managing Late Arrivals

- The Gathering Rite: As the opening procession begins, close the main sanctuary doors. Keep one minister available to open them gently for late arrivals if needed. We don't want to draw attention.

4. Liturgical Roles during Mass

The Offertory Collection

- The collection is a liturgical offering of the community's fruit.
- When the Prayers of the Faithful concludes, all ministers walk towards the altar, bow together, and take the four small baskets from the steps. Two will go down the middle and two to the outsides.
- Move from the front pews to the back, passing baskets through **every pew**. Make sure the basket passes **by every person**.
- After the collection, combine the money into the large gift basket in the gathering space.

Presentation of the Gifts

- The idea is for this to be a representation of the entire community, so before Mass you can invite a family or 2-4 individuals to be gift bearers. If they agree, ask them to go to the gathering space after the Prayers of the Faithful.
- Occasionally the children from Liturgy of the Word for Children will bring up the gifts, but they will communicate this to you ahead of time.
- When the group comes to the gathering space to bring up the gifts, explain the procession order:
 - Collection Basket, then Water and Wine, then Hosts.
- If no volunteers are available, Hospitality Ministers will reverently carry the gifts forward to the Priest.

- At the 11am Mass, two unrelated ushers should follow the people bringing up the gifts (or present the collection basket themselves) to the priest and then carry it out to the office where they will already be counting money.
- Staff will try to notify you ahead of time if there will be anything irregular happening like a second collection, no collection, a visiting priest.

Communion

- Communion Support: You do not need to usher pews to the aisle, but be available if there is any confusion (like someone with a walker blocking the aisle and they don't know where to go). You should join the end of the Communion line and notify the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion about anyone needing the Eucharist brought to them in their pew. You may ask handicap people when they arrive if they want communion brought to them.

Concluding Rite & Housekeeping

- After the Final Blessing, move swiftly to your exit doors. As the recession begins, open the exterior doors.
- Smile, hand out bulletins, and say something like: *"Thank you for coming! Have a blessed week!"*
- At 4:30pm collect the money right after Mass and put it in the safe. At 8:30am Mass, two designated ministers must immediately take the collection basket to the parish office. These two should not be related to each other.
- Walk through pews to collect trash, straighten hymnals, and bring items left behind to the Lost and Found box in the Gathering Space. Return your nametag to the Vesting Sacristy.

5. Welcome Sundays (First Sunday of the Month)

Welcome Sundays are dedicated to building a culture of deep parish community.

- Nametag Ministry: One minister mans the nametag table in the gathering space, warmly encouraging everyone to write and wear a nametag.
- After Mass, invite people to the donut line. Look for opportunities to introduce yourself, ask visitors how long they've been in the area, and connect them with others.

6. Minister Expectations

Ministry Scheduling

- We use Pushpay for all scheduling. Please sign yourself up preferably a month ahead for open slots. You can do this in two ways:

- Download the parish app: “St. Pius X Catholic Parish” and click Serve and Browse Open Positions.
- Click the MANAGE MY SERVING link in one of the emails from the coordinator.
- We aim for four ministers per weekend Mass. Sometimes we may have five for Welcome Sundays (first Sunday of the month). You may occasionally be requested to serve on Holy Days of Obligation.
- If you cannot serve a date you are signed up for, please go into the app or serving link and Decline / Request a Sub. You may also contact the coordinator.
- Contact Dawn Grabs, dgrabs@spxmission.org or 913-259-4801 if you have any questions.

Expectations for Attire

Your clothing reflects your reverence for the House of God and your respect for the community you serve.

- Scheduled Ministers: Please dress in professional, modest attire (e.g., collared shirts, slacks, business casual dresses, or blouses). Avoid casual beachwear, athletic attire, or graphic t-shirts. Clothes should not be distracting to people.
- Unscheduled Ministers: If you are attending Mass but not scheduled, we ask that you still dress nicely. If a scheduled minister is absent, we may ask you to step in.

7. Emergency & Safety Protocols

Medical Emergencies

- Stay Calm & Assess: If someone becomes ill, gently assist them to the gathering space, bathroom, or outside if they are mobile.
- Do Not Move: If a parishioner collapses or loses consciousness, do not attempt to move them. Immediately call 911.
- Lifesaving Equipment:
 - AED Locations: One is outside the **Vesting Sacristy** at the back of the church; the second is in the Office Lobby.
 - A first aid kit is located in the Working Sacristy.

Fire & Evacuation

- Familiarize yourself with all fire extinguisher and alarm pull-station locations.
- In an evacuation, clear the exit pathways and actively guide the elderly, families with small children, and those using wheelchairs or walkers to the nearest safe exit.

Security Concerns

- If a situation arises where law enforcement or security intervention is necessary for the safety of the parish, call 911 immediately and notify the Priest if safe to do so.