

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church

MINISTRY GUIDEBOOK

MINISTERS OF WELCOME

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF

Ministers of Welcome

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History of the Ministry

The ministry began several thousand years ago when Christians found that they could no longer worship in synagogues. Members of the Christian community would host services in their homes, and as such would welcome other members as they arrived. The Acts of the Apostles mention the many times they were welcomed into new places of worship by warm and inviting brethren. A clerical order of porter (*ostiarus, or doorkeeper*) was instituted in the third century A.D. During their ordination porters were called to “Ring the bells and open the church and sacristy, and to open the book for the preacher.” During the early years of the church, when celebrating the Mass was always at risk of interruption by unwanted detractors, the porter was also tasked with keeping the entrance secure and free from disturbance. In 1972 Pope Paul VI formally abolished the order of porter. The important task of porter then referred to, as usher would now rest in the capable hands of the laity. In recent years many parishes have adopted the title of Ministers or Welcome (*or Ministers of Hospitality*) to more accurately reflect the role they serve in the Parish and the Mass.

Purpose and Use of this document

The general purpose of this document is to provide quick and convenient guide for ongoing use in support of the ministry. It should also be used to train new Ministers of Welcome and serve as a functional reference for others within the liturgy ministry as needed. This guide should be located in a common area and its location should be public to all who may need it. This is a dynamic or living document; therefore it should be updated as often as necessary (*at least once a year*). Please make on-going suggestions for additional content, updates or editorial review. This is our guide, and we are personally responsible to make it dynamic, relevant, practical and useful.

Roles & Responsibilities

Community:

We are the first and final impression that parishioners have of their weekly worship experience. It is our highest concern to provide them with a sense of community.

Our ministry is first and foremost concerned with people. Therefore our primary role is that of Greeter. During Mass, Christ is present in our hearts and in each member of the assembly. He (*Jesus*) did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. The same should hold true for us. The mass is the moment of true self-realization of the “church” as we assemble for worship. In our service to others we must see our role as ministers and not as passive “helpers” who have assigned tasks and duties. If we see our selves in this way, others will too. Ministers of Welcome are the first and final impression that parishioners have of their weekly worship experience. It is our highest concern to provide them with a sense of community. In the course of our ministry we should address the most immediate need of each parishioner, which is to be recognized and made to feel important or worthy (*of our time and attention*). The most effective way to go about this is to look them in the eye, shake their hand and greet them with their name. If we don’t know their name, we should ask. Otherwise we should do everything practical to make them feel welcome (*the verbal invitation to join in worship as a family*). The following section will go on to detail the primary duties we are asked to perform each week. If you would be so kind, please keep at the top of that list the most important responsibility we have - which is to greet everyone we come in contact with, whether we’ve know them for years or have just met for them first time, and help them to feel warm, worthy and welcome. The traditional role that Ministers of Welcome performs during mass is that of usher. These tasks are very important to the “Flow” of Mass, and contribute to a sense of direction and service that make each mass unique. In this role the Ministers of Welcome help parishioners find adequate seating, help with issues that arise during Mass and tend to the collection of tithing.

Each role is distinct, yet we should work to integrate all these various roles to better serve our parish community. We are the first and last impression that people have of our Mass and more importantly our parish, and as such we should view ourselves as an extension of the church in service to the Lord.

Primary Duties

The following are the primary duties of the Ministers of Welcome:

1. **Welcome and greet parishioners as they arrive.** Please plan to arrive 20 minutes in advance to ensure you have your individual time for prayer and reflection. Then be situated in the Narthex prior to the start of Mass prepared to greet. We encourage each of you to wear nametags, and to use the persons name, when possible, to greet friends and fellow parishioners as they arrive.
2. **Seating (Before and During Mass)** – Help parishioners’ find adequate seating as Mass begins. *The doors to the church should be closed prior to the opening procession. It is necessary to seat after Mass has begun, although we should consider reverence to the Mass over convenience. (e.g. we should discourage seating during the reading of the Word.)*
3. **The Kiss of Peace** – This is a time where we can further extend a welcome to those who we don’t know, or possibly families we know that are new, and could use a warm welcome.. *Please make a point to seek out your fellow Ministers of Welcome This demonstrates our continued commitment to the Ministry and each other. Each week offer the sign of peace to at least one, if not several people or families that you don’t know. This will go a long way in helping us achieve our shared goal of enhancing the worship experience and building a strong sense of community.*
4. **Presentation of the Gifts** – At the beginning of Mass we need to chose a family or group to take up the gifts during the Offertory. *Please make every effort to ensure that we spread this duty among as many different representatives of the community as possible. We need to represent people from all economic, social, ethnicity, age and gender. This will again help build a well founded sense of community, and will involved a large and diverse group in this important part of the liturgy.*
5. **Take up collections** (Regular weekly collections, and special collections as required)
 - a. Consolidate monies and deposit as appropriate as per each mass (*This varies based on the Mass - The hour captain will have detail for your particular Mass*)
**** NOTE** – There should always be at least two people present when handling money. Tithing is a very important part of both our spiritual lives and the overall welfare of the church. We should always conduct ourselves in a way that shows respect for these gifts, and do so in humble manner.
6. **Communion Traffic**
 - a. Based on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) we facilitate a procession starting from the back of the church (*more detail is provided by maps and individual hour captains for your specific Mass*)

- b. Be aware that there may be individuals with special requirements (*e.g. - They may required that you have a Eucharistic Minister bring Holy Communion to them either before or after the general distribution*)

7. **Attend to the needs of parishioners** during Mass including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Answer questions regarding facilities
 - b. Help with emergency situations (*Medical issues, spills, etc.*)
 - c. Help with extra seating (*chairs*) and special accommodations (*Large Groups, handicapped, etc.*)
8. **Facilitate final dismissal** from the church
 - a. Open doors and ensure safe passage. *Please refrain from opening the doors until at least after the final blessing. Also check for hazards in the path of travel*
 - b. Distribute bulletins and other materials as required
9. **Prepare the church for the next Mass**
 - a. Clean and order the pews - *Remove trash, straiten hymnals, etc.*
 - b. Other - Restock Bulletin holders, address any spills or uncommon mess

Overview of Facilities

Chapel

- Perpetual adoration Chapel (*Please help to ensure this area is free from disruptions*)
- Restrooms
- Elevator

Narthex

- Cabinet area (South side)
 - **Name tags** - First drawer from the right
(Please wear the new tags - If you lose or misplace your tag please let me know and we can order replacements)
 - **Short Term Lost and Found** (*Small items can be placed in the drawer next to the name tags*)
 - **Collection baskets - In the far right cabinets**
- Gathering area (Center)
 - Used for “Overflow” seating /Baptismal / Seasonal decor
- Welcome / Literature area (North side)

Church

- Refrain from talking in the church - *When practical move to the Narthex*
- Handicap seating - *There are three designated areas, ask your mass captain if you have questions*
- Bulletin holders
- Gift table - *Please do not use for bulletins or baskets*

Sacristy

- This is where we consolidate the collections
- The safe is located in the small room in sacristy (*Bags are located here*)
- Emergency contact list will be by the phone in this room (*Numbers, dialing instructions, etc.*)

Lost and Found

- Located in the chair storage room
- Please assist people in looking for their lost items, and make a note for the parish office if we cannot find it during Mass

Janitor Closet

- Mop and cleaning supplies including Clean-up “dust” for vomit, etc.
- Additional closet downstairs by restrooms in the case you need additional supplies

Lower level

- Meeting rooms, Library, etc.