



Contents

VIGIL MASS USHER MINISTRY GUIDELINES	2
COMMITMENT AND UNDERSTANDING.....	2
Initial Setup.....	2
Pre Mass actions.....	3
Procedures related to Doors	3
Seating assistance.....	3
Parishioners with Mobility Issues.....	3
Seating late arrivals.	4
Presenting Offerings of the Faithful (Gifts)	4
During the Mass	4
Count and report attendance.....	4
Offertory Collection.....	4
Bulletin distribution.....	5
Communion Procession.....	5
Non-processional Communicants.....	5
Dismissal and Departure	5
Special Circumstances	6

VIGIL MASS USHER MINISTRY GUIDELINES

COMMITMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

Ministry Promise: Show Christ's love for all; demonstrate everyone is welcome; help all depart feeling commendable because they were here.

- Attend a one-on-one training session; commit to at least four, and not more than six monthly assignments per year.
- Go through Safe Environment certification.
- Use the Ministry Scheduler Pro system for scheduling and substitutions.
- Dress codes for all masses are the same. Usher badges are worn by all. Blue blazer is required for men. Ties are required from All Saint's Day, November 1st, to Easter and optional after Easter (but preferred on Feast Days like Ascension, Pentecost, and Assumption). Dress for women should be appropriate for Mass.
- Arrive about 20 minutes (or more) before Mass begins, and sign in. Always check on/discuss Special circumstances with fellow ushers.

Initial Setup

Some actions are needed to prepare for the Mass. The first usher to arrive for the service should perform these actions. **All ushers must sign in using the Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP) app on the iPad near the Adoration Chapel door when they first arrive.**

- The **weekly bulletins** are in the Ministry Room (accessed through the Cry Room). The Vigil Mass is the first Mass of the weekend using the bulletins for that Sunday. They are normally delivered prior to the weekend and must be placed in the individual trays that will be placed at each of the usher stations and in the narthex. One of the boxes they are shipped in is usually opened, if not open it and move some bulletins from the shipping box to the trays on the bookshelf, putting some in each of six trays. In the shipping box, the bulletins are arranged in groups of about 30, with the stappled side alternating. When placing them in the trays, place at least one group of 30 in each tray and make sure all in the tray are facing the same way. The trays will be distributed to the usher stations after the collection has been completed and distributed by the two ushers who do not take the collection to the safe.
- The **Offertory collection baskets** are also located in this room and must be prepared (and stationed). One large collection basket (purple lining) will be used to unify the various passed offertory baskets (green lining). Prepare the large basket as follows. Take one plastic liner bag from the roll found in the tray on top of the bookshelf along with a plastic zip tie from the same tray. Place the zip tie in the bottom of the large basket and line the basket with the liner bag. There will be a tag on the whiteboard above the bookcase with the Mass time ID. Place that tag in the bottom of the liner bag, so the collection counters know which Mass the collection is from. Take the large basket and eight small baskets from the server room and position the large basket and four small baskets at the back wall of

the church (near the water fount next to the cry room window), and four small baskets on the other side of the center aisle (near the water fount next to the Adoration Chapel window).

- If there is a **Mass count** page on the whiteboard (along with the collection tag) there is to be a count at this service. This normally only occurs during October but may be called for at other times. Please make sure to inform all the other ushers at this service that there is to be a count. (see “*Count and report attendance*” below).
- The last initial action is to unlock the **rear side doors**. A key to unlock them is in the cabinet to the right of the Adoration Chapel door. Take the key and go to the rear side doors (at the aisles on the Mary and Joseph sides) and unlock the doors (push the door lever in, insert the door key, and rotate it to lock the lever in). Since there is a Hispanic Mass after the Vigil Mass, we do not reverse this process after the Vigil Mass since they will lock up the church.

Pre Mass actions

The Usher actions prior to the beginning of the Mass are all related to maintaining a quiet, reverent environment so that those in the church can prepare for the Mass.

Procedures related to Doors

- **Piazza Doors** (outside) are to remain closed and are not blocked in the open position by ushers. Greeters & parishioners open and close Piazza Doors. Ushers do not open Piazza Doors; if these doors have been left open, make sure they are closed at the end of Mass.
- **Narthex Doors** (inside) are to remain closed, except just prior to the processional and when the celebrant approaches during recessional. At the end of Mass, these doors can be blocked open to allow for an easier exit for the parishioners.
- **Side Aisle Doors** are to remain closed and are not blocked in the open position by ushers. Individuals open and close side doors when they enter or depart.

Seating assistance

The objective is to minimize any distraction during the Liturgy of the Word when assisting those who arrive after Mass begins. There are three (3) seating- assist options for prior to the start of the processional.

- Remain in the rear aisle and direct individuals to open pews, or let them choose their own seats.
- Meet individuals in the rear aisle and escort them to open pews. When escorting, the usher politely informs those already seated there of the number of fellow worshipers coming into their pew. Usher returns to the rear aisle without waiting for everyone to be seated.
- When there is a continuous flow of new arrivals, usher may remain in the aisle standing next to an open pew, waiting for the worshipers to walk to you. Again, usher informs those seated of the number of fellow worshipers entering the pew before moving on to the next open pew. Use of fingers is an appropriate way to communicate the number of pew spaces. Waving your hand to beckon worshipers, however, is not appropriate in our church

Parishioners with Mobility Issues

The first pew on either side of the center aisle is designated as reserved for those with mobility issues (and their assistants). The last pew on either side of the center aisle (the section on the center aisle) also has that

designation. Ushers should make sure these areas are not used by those who do not appear to have these issues (such as late arrivals). All ushers should also watch for parishioners who may have mobility issues and direct them to these areas, but if their desire is to sit elsewhere, politely ask if they need communion brought to them and inform the usher serving the St. Joseph side of their position (see “*Non-processional Communicants*” below).

Seating late arrivals.

When the entrance hymn begins, ushers locate open pews to assist with seating as needed during the Introductory Rite. “May I help you locate a seat?” is appropriate. Seating people from the center aisle first is less distracting. Knowing God’s presence on the altar during the Liturgy of the Word, ushers should stand in their rear aisle stations to listen to the readings – except when assisting late arrivals.

Ushers may direct or escort individuals to open pews until the First Reading. Ushers remain in the rear aisle through the readings, responsorial, gospel and homily. If necessary, late arrivals can be escorted to open pews during the singing of the responsorial or the singing of the Alleluia before the gospel.

Recalling the objective is to minimize distractions to all listening to the Word of God, ushers are asked to use “common sense” and judgment regarding the seating of those who arrive during the readings and homily. (i.e. should a large build-up of people waiting to be seated occur, seating everyone after might also become a distraction. Use your judgment.)

Presenting Offerings of the Faithful (Gifts)

Prior to Mass, center aisle ushers secure and instruct a couple or family to present the offerings of the faithful. Presenters leave their pew and move to the rear aisle when ushers walk down their aisles to begin Collection. Holding the gifts, the Presenters immediately take their position in the center aisle at last pew. Presenters begin walking to the Celebrant when he begins to move toward center aisle to receive the gifts. Usually (not always), the Cross bearer leads presenters down the aisle.

During the Mass

Once the Mass begins, the ushers should remain at the rear of the nave and participate in the service but be vigilant about any occurrences that may need action and respond accordingly. They may be seated during the homily but be ready at the proper time for the following actions.

Count and report attendance

The time to count mass attendance may vary by specific liturgy. Generally, this is during the first or second reading. Usher Captains know the best time for their masses. Record the count for your section on the appropriate form. The goal is that worshipers do not notice usher using hands or fingers to count attendance

Offertory Collection

Diocesan Guidelines prohibit the large Collections Basket from being carried by the same person continuously and captains have rotation programs for their teams. Guidelines also stipulate one escort usher joins the usher who carries and secures the Collections Basket in the safe. Regular & Second collections are not comingled.

At the end of the Creed, the four ushers gather at the rear of the center aisle, with each usher having two small collection baskets. All ushers walk down the center aisle to the front aisle and bow together. The ushers from

the side aisles then proceed to their respective aisles. Collections are made by passing a small basket to the parishioner at the end of the first and third pew. The baskets are passed by the parishioners to the end of the pew away from the usher, passed back a pew and returned to the end where the usher moves it back two pews for the next pass. After all pews have made their contributions, the collections are transferred into the large Collections Basket in the rear aisle, near the center, carried to the back sacristy via the side aisle and secured in the safe.

Second Collections. From time-to-time second collections will be made. That collection occurs when distribution of Communion is finished, usually when the celebrant returns to his chair for meditation. Ushers walk in unison down their aisles to the front aisle, bow together and distribute baskets. Special collections are combined into a large Collections Basket and immediately secured in the back sacristy safe, in the same manner as the Offertory Collection.

Bulletin distribution

When two ushers are taking the Offertory Collection to the safe, the other two ushers should distribute the bulletin trays to the various stations: one tray to each side aisle; both sides of the center aisle; and one on each table in the narthex (on the side near the nave).

Communion Procession

The objective is to have a respectful, dignified and efficient flow of communicants. Most communicants look for direction at the Communion Procession.

Immediately after the celebrant receives the Eucharist and as he begins distribution to the Extraordinary Ministers, ushers walk in unison to the front of their respective aisle, bow together and then move into position to direct the procession for their sections. The ushers should move back slowly and only allow the next pew back to start into the procession until the current pew has cleared. On the center aisle, if the two sections are becoming cleared at different rates, parishioners from the slower side can be directed to the faster side so that the Priest and EM serving the middle will finish near the same time.

Non-processional Communicants

Those parishioners with mobility difficulties are usually directed to specific pews (in the front and rear) where the Eucharist will be brought to them. Those in the front pew are served by the Priest and the EM assigned to the middle position. The EM stationed at the St. Joseph side aisle is designated as the one to serve the communicants unable to walk in the procession. The usher on the St. Joseph side will be the final person in the procession on that aisle, and after receiving, the usher should tell the EM there is a communicant in the rear; then, lead the EM to the pew(s) where those parishioners are.

Dismissal and Departure

All ushers remain at the stations during the singing of the recessional hymn. Center aisle ushers open narthex doors when the celebrant approaches. The other doors to the narthex can be blocked open after the celebrant has left the nave.

Bulletins are not handed out until after the recessional, when the celebrant arrives in the narthex (not before). People leaving early can take one from the tray. The ushers should stand in the nave near the last pew of their station and be ready to hand a bulletin (and a friendly greeting) to the parishioners as they leave the church.

To prepare the church for the next liturgy, there are some final actions that the ushers can perform. Ushers should inspect their sections, clearing pews of articles left and placing hymnals and ministry sheets in their proper positions. Bulletin trays are returned to the Ministry Room. All doors (except confessional doors) are to be closed.

Special Circumstances

The guidelines above generally cover the “normal” circumstances that occur in the church during a Vigil Mass. There are some cases where special celebrations or liturgies would require actions not covered by them. There are also occasions where the Mass is conducted in the Multi-Purpose Building, and what is stated above may not work there. In all cases, the ushers are to use their best judgement as to what actions to take.