

# Saint Mark Church Usher Duties with Timeline and Evacuation Procedures

**This outline is intended to define the logistics of Ushering. The religious / worship aspect of our ministry is more properly covered by Liturgical Press booklets such as "The Ministry of Ushers" by Fr. Gregory F Smith.**

In his booklet, Fr. Smith discusses ministering to the people and to the community. He highlights the importance of dependability, kindness, accenting the positive and reverence. He offers suggestions of how to be successful in these areas. He also recommends we remember we are assisting worshipers while we ourselves, are worshiping.

**For purpose of these logistics the orientation is facing the sanctuary.**

## **Usher section assignments are:**

- ❖ Right and left front center Nave (church proper).
- ❖ Right and left rear center Nave (beginning at the "crossover aisle").
- ❖ Right and left Nave "narrow/side" sections (rarely staffed – perhaps at Holidays).
- ❖ Right and left Transepts (aka Wings).
- ❖ Lead usher at the rear to monitor / assist as needed.

## **General Guidelines / Rules:**

- ❖ Strongly encourage anyone standing in the Nave or Transepts to sit if there are seats available.
- ❖ The cry room is the Narthex. Encourage noisy babies to enjoy the Narthex.
- ❖ There is no eating or drinking in the Nave or Transepts. Baby bottles are permitted.
- ❖ The ushers' room is to be locked at all times.
- ❖ Bulletins are not to be handed out before mass. Monsignor may instruct ushers to hand out certain documents such as the Financial Report before mass.
- ❖ The Bridal room is to be locked after the procession. Worshipers are not to use this room as a cry or nursing room.
- ❖ Ushers should not genuflect except upon first entrance and final exit to the church.
- ❖ There is baby sitting service in the Fr. Kerin Center. Check times on Narthex placard.
- ❖ Lost and Found is a shelf opposite the utilities closet/ushers room.
- ❖ Remember the Narthex is a worship area for some; ushers should not congregate or talk loudly there.
- ❖ All ushers should be familiar with the exits of the church.
- ❖ Ushers should be aware of the janitor closet location and contents

## **Ushers Dress Code:**

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- ❖ Resort casual at a minimum, preferably a coat and tie for men, similarly appropriate dress for ladies.

## Lead Usher

- ❖ Each mass will have a lead usher and a backup lead who know the safe combination.

## Communications with the Usher Ministry Leader and other ushers:

- ❖ Keep your contact information current on the master usher list which Scott Fisher maintains. Scott's email is [Fish9012@aol.com](mailto:Fish9012@aol.com).
- ❖ Read the various announcements Scott provides regarding schedules, collections and other events that need our ministry.
- ❖ If you have to miss "your" mass it is your responsibility to find a substitute in advance. A convenient way is to send an "all hands" request via the ushers master email list.

## 20 - 30 Minutes Prior to mass

- ❖ The team lead collects the ushers' room key ring and keeps it on his person.
- ❖ The keys ring includes keys to the usher room door, the janitor closet and the hearing impaired devices. The ring hangs on a hook at the right side of the room immediately inside the door. See the Sacristan or a Deacon to open the room.
- ❖ Lead Usher confirms usher team headcount and assigns positions.
- ❖ Check in with Sacristan for any last minute special needs (2<sup>nd</sup> collection, attendance count, etc.)
- ❖ Confirm the gift table has these items: intentions basket, Purificators, wine, water and the hosts. Note: Purificators stay on the table for emergencies involving spilled Precious Blood or dropped Blessed Body.
- ❖ Check the offertory gift signup book for your mass. If a family has signed up, locate them. If none has, choose a suitable, appropriately dressed family - 3 person minimum. Instruct them to come to gift table at the rear of the Nave at the end of intentions.
- ❖ Open all Narthex to Nave doors; opening the Narthex to outside doors is optional depending on weather.
- ❖ Using the maroon seat back signs, reserve a row at the rear of the Nave for handicap, elderly and ushers.
- ❖ Take appropriate number of offertory baskets to the Transepts. Place them on the floor at the right rear as out of sight as possible. Regular collection = 3 brown baskets, add 2 red baskets for second collections
- ❖ Take a small amount (40-50) of bulletins to the Transepts locations where they are to be placed out of sight.

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## **15 Minutes Prior to mass**

- ❖ All ushers should be in position for the Celebrants entrance.

## **Hearing Impaired Aids**

- ❖ The usher key ring contains the key for the hearing aid devices which are located in the ushers closet. Look for a black hinged box.
- ❖ See the instructions in the box and be sure to get a signature for "deposit".

## **Seating**

- ❖ A "point usher" should be stationed at the center doors to direct worshipers to the front ushers.
- ❖ Seat parishioners encouraging them to fill in front to back.
- ❖ During high attendance masses ushers are to courteously compress each pew row.
- ❖ Assist any special needs (wheelchair, handicap, elderly). Ask if they will need communion brought to them.
- ❖ Continue to seat person from the Narthex to the Nave until the beginning of the first reading. During the first reading seat only from the side aisles. At the end of the first reading there will be no more general seating. Assist only elderly / physically challenged persons and do those down the side aisles. Transept ushers follow the same seating rules.

## **Entrance Procession**

- ❖ Just prior to or at the ringing of the entrance bell, at the point that the announcer says "take this time to reflect on the meaning of the mass" or some such phrase, close all Narthex to Nave door holding all in the Narthex.
- ❖ Clear right and center aisle to allow an unencumbered procession.
- ❖ When the procession is at least halfway down the center aisle (at the cross over) open the side (not center) doors and direct all worshipers to the side aisles.
- ❖ As procession moves up center aisle seating can resume from side aisles only continuing until the end of the first reading.

## **Mass Begins at the Sign of the Cross**

- ❖ Close the Nave to Narthex doors. Close the outside doors.
- ❖ During the first reading (no sooner) hang the "mass is in session" signs, stored in the ushers room, on the outside door crosses, directing direct late worshipers to enter the either of the side Transept doors.

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- ❖ Post an usher at the rear of the right aisle to receive a “full” signal from the right Transept usher. If and when the right Transept fills up, post an usher outside to direct late arrivals to enter the left Transept.

## **Offertory Collection**

- ❖ **Regular Collection process:** Tan baskets are used for this collection.
- ❖ At no time will an usher turn his back on the Sacristy during the collection. They should make every attempt to face forward.
- ❖ At the intentions the lead usher should distribute the brown baskets as follows:
  - Front and rear center ushers get 2 baskets each.
  - Transept ushers gather their baskets, deposited there before mass.
- ❖ Immediately after the conclusion of intentions, the 4 center ushers should walk up the center aisle. The front ushers stop at the first row the back ushers at the first row at the “cross”. Transept ushers should move to the front of their sections. All ushers then bow (not genuflect) together which is initiated by the front ushers, all follow suit.
- ❖ Center section: Start the baskets at alternating rows (1 & 3) continuing through the entire section.
- ❖ Transept section: Start one basket in the first 3 rows, then start the narrow section, pick up the Transept basket at row 3, cross the transept aisle and continue with 2 baskets for the balance. The narrow section basket can travel “by itself”. The lead usher should monitor these as best he can.
- ❖ **Second Collection Process:** Red baskets are used for second collection.
  - If enough ushers are available two ushers (one for the front section and one for the rear) with two red baskets each follow the regular collection ushers in this manner:
  - When the regular baskets have started the 5<sup>th</sup> row of each section the second collection ushers begin to walk forward and use one basket on each side – same as the regular collection but with one less basket per side.
  - If there are not enough ushers the regular collection is followed by the second one in the same manner – but the same ushers do both jobs, carrying the red baskets with the brown ones.
  - Transept ushers follow the same process.
  - Transept ushers start the outside aisle section in the same manner – start the red basket after the regular collection arrives at row 5.
  - In all cases extra ushers and the lead usher can assist as needed.
  - In no case should the ushers detract from the Gifts Procession. Ushers must “give way” to the procession
- ❖ **Alternate second collection process:**

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- The ushers for each section are to bring up the two tan baskets and one red basket.
- They will all bow in unison and hand the white baskets to rows one and three as always.
- They will continue to follow the baskets back while still holding the red basket.
- Once the family with the gifts leaves the alter the ushers will then go back to the front of their section to start the one red basket.
- They will then go back and complete the first collection (White baskets).
- Once they bring the white baskets to the brides room they can go back to get the red baskets. In some cases for full crowds the four center ushers should go back with a second red basket to pick up the remaining rows.
- ❖ Ushers are to keep all baskets in their sight at all times.
- ❖ Ushers collect the baskets at the end of their sections then go to the brides' room for consolidation. Blue bag is for normal collection, red bag is for second collection. Be sure to keep these separate.
- ❖ Ushers replace the baskets in the usher's room.
- ❖ Lead usher puts the bag in the usher room safe, being sure to lock it and have someone witness the action.
- ❖ All ushers return to their positions except the transept ushers who stay in the back with the others. Do not return to the transepts.

## Gift bearing procession

- ❖ As the intentions are read the family to bring up gifts should go to the gift table in the back of the Nave to be set up by the lead usher.
- ❖ The procession is in this order; prayer basket, holy water, wine, hosts. The Purificators stay on the table for emergencies involving spilled Precious Blood or dropped Blessed Body.
- ❖ Remind them that the gifts are to be given to the celebrant the same order as the procession. If there are not enough people to carry all the gifts, ushers may assist.
- ❖ Also instruct them that after handing gifts to the Celebrant the family should wait for a blessing or other celebrant acknowledgment, then bow in unison and return to their seats.
- ❖ The Cross Bearer will leave the Sanctuary, joining the family at the gift table in the rear of the church, and then will lead the group in procession at the celebrants' signal which is usually his stepping off the sanctuary to the Nave floor.

## Communion

- ❖ When the celebrant gives the Cup to the last Extra Ordinary Ministers', all ushers will proceed up to the front and "cross" rows and bow in unison as at the collection. The transept ushers walk up the side aisles in unison with the front ushers, bow and then proceed to their positions for communion assistance.

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- ❖ When ALL the Extra Ordinary Ministers (wait for the Cup bearers!) are in place at each station ushers direct each row of worshipers in sequence to the EM's. Note that the narrow side rows follow the adjacent center row to communion. The center ushers should be aware that sometimes this will "stall". They may need to leave their positions to gently move them along.
- ❖ **Choir Mass:**
  - Hold the choir at the open center doors until the EOM's are leaving the sacristy/alter area. At the same time as the EOM's are walking to their positions guide the choir down the center aisle to the rear section ushers. Those ushers will then move to the rear of the choir line ready to then guide the first row worshipers into the queue.
  - If the choir arrives after the EOM's begin distribution, the lead will guide the choir to the head of the line. The rear section ushers will "hold" the worshipers in their rows until the choir has cleared.
- ❖ The lead remains in the back to direct the Narthex worshipers through the doors when the rear center has finished.
- ❖ When you have a special needs parishioner, immediately following your own communion request that the Eucharistic Minister(s) follow you and then lead them to that person.

## Closing

- ❖ At the conclusion of the mass the ushers should wait in positions until the celebrant has stepped off the sanctuary / alter and processes to the Narthex.
- ❖ Position 2 ushers in front of each center Nave to Narthex door. Direct all "early leavers" to the side doors.
- ❖ When the procession nears the Nave to Narthex doors the attending ushers open them and propping them open and allowing the procession to pass by.
- ❖ Only after the celebrant gives the final blessing should the ushers open all the outer doors and hand out the bulletins.
- ❖ After most worshipers have left the Nave and Transepts ushers should check entire area for items that have been left behind. Place items in the Lost and Found shelf, return the intentions basket to the gifts table.
- ❖ An usher should offer to accompany a deacon or priest taking the collection to the main office in the Kerin center.
- ❖ At the end of the mass the ring is to be turned over to the next mass lead. If timing does not allow this, hang the ring and close the door, assuring its locked.

## Emergencies:

- ❖ There are first aid and CPR kits in the Narthex to the elevator / left side of the Nave doors. Report any use of the items so they can be replaced.

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- ❖ If a worshiper falls ill and/or becomes disabled, immediately call 911, comfort and attend to the person to the best of your training and abilities. There are telephones in the Bridal room, working Sacristy and choir loft. Touch outside line then 911. If you or any of the other ushers have been trained in CPR, start it as appropriate. Check for pulse and if necessary use the defibulator located in the Narthex.
- ❖ If a Consecrated Blessed Body of Christ Host or Precious Blood is found anywhere, cover it with a Purificator cloth (on the gifts table) or other clean cloth / paper. Guard it from further movement. Notify a deacon, priest or the Sacristan.
- ❖ In the event of regurgitation, go to the restrooms and get paper products to cover / clean the "event". Access the janitor closet for additional cleaning equipment.
- ❖ In the event of a fire alarm, assume your positions, as you do for collection and direct the worshipers row by row in an orderly fashion to the nearest exit. (See Below)
- ❖ As in all situations common sense should prevail. Our duties as ushers are many and we need to be aware of all situations. And always when in doubt Ask!
- ❖ In case of a **FIRE or a FIRE ALARM ACTIVATION** see the following **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE** as provided by the parish office.....

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## EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In case of fire, the Priests, Deacons, Lead Usher, Sacristan, or Staff will first ensure that the fire alarm has been activated and the Fire Department has been called by dialing 9-1-1.

**UPON HEARING THE FIRE ALARM HORNS, BEGIN IMMEDIATE EVACUATION**, the Celebrant Must immediately and calmly take control of the group and inform them, "This is a fire alarm. We will evacuate the building now. Please follow the direction of the ushers."

**Ushers will direct occupants to the nearest exit door.**

**NEVER SILENCE OR RESET THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM UNTIL PERMISSION IS GIVEN BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

While the occupants are moving toward the exits, the ushers will search the entire building to ensure that all persons are evacuating via the building exit/entrances. An usher should be assigned to check storage rooms, sacristies, the family room, and restrooms, to verify that all occupants are evacuating.

**DO NOT USE ANY ELEVATORS AS A WAY TO EXIT THE BUILDING; USE THE STAIRS.**

All occupants must proceed in an orderly fashion to the exits. Remember that some persons may require assistance due to special needs.

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Clergy, Sacristan, or Staff will meet the fire department with keys to the building and information on the status of emergency and or evacuation.

Do not allow anyone to re-enter the building without approval from the Fire Department.

If You Discover a Fire, or See or Smell Smoke - **RACE**

**R**escue persons in immediate danger if you can safely do so.

**A**ctivate fire alarms by pulling the nearest fire alarm pull station and call 9-1-1.

**C**ontain fire and smoke by closing as many doors to the fire area as possible.

**E**vacuate immediately all persons to the assembly area, Extinguish with portable fire extinguisher only if the evacuation has already begun, the fire department has already been called, you do not put yourself or anyone else in danger, the fire is very small and contained, and you have been trained on how to operate a fire extinguisher.

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