Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church act as hosts and hostesses to warmly welcome the people of God to each liturgical celebration as well as perform various duties as required of them and defined in the Minister of Hospitality/Usher Handbook.

Minister of Hospitality-Usher
Usher Handbook
2014

Rev. A×(×1,'39, Ak-55, O. Praem, Pastor
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An Usher’s Prayer

Lord, you make all kinds of people,
even people like me.
In your love, you gather them all into your Church.
As you gather your people this day,
help me to serve them in a Christ-like manner, even
as your Son served those who gathered about him.
Make me prayerful and patient, helpful and
understanding, and may I radiate the joy that
faith brings as I serve their needs.
Give me your strength to support my fellow ministers.
May all who assemble to celebrate our common
faith in the risen Savior be glad of heart for being
here and for having encountered your Son in one
another, in our priest, at the tables of the
Book and the Bread, and through the ministry of
ushers like me.
I ask this in Jesus’ name.
Amen.

Ushering—What it Means

- Yours is the first of Christ’s faces to greet God’s people as they assemble in prayer.
- Your greeting is the word that welcomes the stranger to be at home, or the silence that makes of our assembly a foreign land.
- Yours is the task of discretion: knowing how to welcome, and, when and where, to seat the latecomer.
- Yours may be the last word that ushers the community to its week of work in the Lord’s vineyard.
✓ Yours is the Lord’s face and voice for those who enter and depart the holy ground of prayer.
✓ Come to your work and your post from your personal prayer; be as ready as the Lord to meet his people.
✓ Let your welcome and your smile be for all who enter; remember that you have time to see your close friends later in the week.
✓ Seek out the lost and confused; do not wait for them to come to you.
✓ When appropriate, lend a hand and an arm to the disabled, remembering your own infirmities.
✓ Greet each person as the Lord, for that is precisely whom you meet.
✓ When taking up the collection, remember that it is for the work of God’s people, especially among the poor, remember too, that many who make an offering are themselves poor.
✓ Remember that you stand at the temple gates: some will come rejoicing and others in fear, some will come healed, and others to seek healing.
✓ Be sensitive, and welcome all as best as you can.
✓ Some will rush by and ignore you: let go of your disappointment and pray for the Lord’s gentle touch on their heavy hurried hearts.
✓ Some may fall ill while at prayer: see to their needs, as you would have them see to yours.
✓ Be slow to judge those who leave early: be glad that they have shared in our prayer and recall that only the Lord knows the reasons of the heart.
✓ When your brothers and sisters thank and praise you for your work, take delight in the welcome they have found, and rejoice in the work the Lord has accomplished through you.
✓ Be faithful in the work you do, for through it the Lord saves his people.

The History of Ushers

The ministry of ushers is the oldest lay ministry in the Catholic Church. The ushers of today have descended from a long line of people of God who have gone before them. During the time of Christ, the doorkeepers of the temple numbered in the hundreds and were the forerunners of today’s ushers.

The more immediate predecessor of today’s usher can be found in the clerical order of porter, instituted in the third century A.D. During those times, it was the duty of the porters or ushers to guard the door of the church against any intruders who might disturb the service. The porter duties were so important that they came to be included in the rite of ordination, where they were specified as “to ring the bells, open the church and sacristy, open the book for the preacher.” In 1972 Pope Paul VI abolished the order of porter and this important task was given over to the laity.
While today's ushers don't ring the bells or open the church, their primary duties and responsibilities include greeting and welcoming parishioners as they enter the church, help them find seats, take up the collection and wish everyone a good day at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Celebration.

The Order of Porter

In the Old Testament Levites were appointed to keep the gates of the tabernacle and later of the temple; they also had charge of the sacred vessels (1 Paral. 9,26). The sacredness of the house of God in the New Testament and of the vessels used for the celebration of the divine mysteries calls for at least the same care and safekeeping. The ostiarii were the doorkeepers or porters of the church. The word is derived from the Latin ostium, the door.

The office was of special importance during the times of persecution. Reliable men were needed to inform the faithful of the time and place of the divine services, to open and lock the doors, to keep out undesirables. In later times the ringing of bells sufficed for the purpose of informing the faithful of the time of the divine services, since there was no further need of informing them of the place.

Opening of the book for the preacher, mentioned as one of the duties of the porter, must also be understood in the light of earlier times. Those ancient rolls were not as handy as a modern book, but often heavy and of considerable size, and the place for reading could not be found readily. The porter, therefore, would carry the book to the ambo and open it for the preacher. In the course of time the care of the sacred vessels was also entrusted to porters, which gave the order added importance.

It seems probable that up to the fourth century porters were not ordained, but simply appointed. Sacristans, Ushers and Janitors perform these duties today.

The Ministry

The Usher - The Minister of Hospitality is a person chosen to reflect the warmth and welcome of Christ himself. Always conscious of Christ's words: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me", Greeters/Ushers are friendly people who are attracted to all age groups and nationalities. The Ministry of Hospitality is open to all - women and men.

The faith of the Ushers enables them to see Christ's presence in individuals and in the gathered community of believers. Ushers can handle emergency situations with courage and aplomb. They carry a dignity about themselves even when performing menial tasks.
Whatsoever You Do to the Least of My People

Stationed at the door of the church, Ministers of Hospitality (ushers) act as hosts to warmly welcome the people of God to each Eucharistic celebration, assist in seating the congregation, support the other ministers and help in the collection.

Introduction

Humble Service

Every liturgical ministry is established to serve the worshiping assembly. All those who serve in special roles are servants of the assembly; their task is to help the assembly fulfill its vital role in the liturgy. The most important role that the usher serves is that of hospitality. The usher is the first person that worshipers meet when they arrive at church. The usher has the opportunity and the responsibility to represent the rest of the assembly in offering hospitality. People's impression of a parish is significantly shaped by the presence or absence of a welcoming atmosphere where they come to worship. Offering a smile and a word of welcome can have a profound impact on people as they arrive, especially if they are visitors to the parish.

Welcoming people and making them feel at home is one way in which ushers help build up the church. Hospitality is a vital element in creating a sense of community for worship. A person who feels welcomed and valued is much more likely to enter wholeheartedly into the celebration of the liturgy, giving thanks to God for the love that God pours out on us.

Appropriate Attire

A neat and reverential appearance is in keeping with the minister's role as a visible example of welcome and hospitality. The ministers' attire should not detract from their role.

1. Men should wear a suit and tie or wear a jacket and tie.
2. Women should wear an appropriate dress of acceptable length or slack suit. Please no sundress.

Remember that the Priests have no choice in what they wear to Mass. Their vestments can be very warm, but we know that we are all engaged in the greatest prayer of all.

Usher Badge

Each Usher should wear the red Usher Badges provided by the Church to be identifiable to our priests, parishioners and guests. Usher badges may be clipped over a shirt pocket, suit coat pocket, or pinned on. Badges will be provided to each Usher by the Church. Ushers may keep their personalized badge. Alternate Ushers should keep their badge in
their car or remember to bring to their Mass so in case they are called upon to serve they will have their badge available.

**Scheduling**

Scheduling of Ushers is done based on Mass preference and is coordinated with the Head Usher. A total of 4 Ushers is necessary for the Saturday 5:00 P.M. Vigil, the 8:00 A.M., 9:30 A.M., 11:00 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. Sunday Masses; The current schedule is posted in the Usher's Room in the Vestibule.

**Seating**

The proper place for seating of Ushers are the designated areas in the rear pews within the assembly. Always attentive to the needs of the faithful, they should sit in the designated places indicated by "RESERVED FOR USHERS" in the rear pews which would enable them to best exercise their ministerial role - i.e., near the door. Ushers should be in their seats when not performing their duties. (See Figure 1)

**Procedures Before The Liturgy**

1. Arrive at the church 15-20 minutes prior to the start of Mass.
2. The first Usher to arrive should make sure the bank money bag for his or her Mass is placed in the Large Offertory Collection Basket (See Figure 1).
3. Put out 4 collection baskets, one at Aisle 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Church. (See Figure 1)
4. Check the pews for items that need to be removed prior to your Mass, i.e. bulletins, water bottles etc., put back songbooks and the Church Sunday Missal book into the book racks on the back of each pew. Also any personal or valuable items left by the parishioners place on the counter in the vestibule. Anything found of significant value should be given to a Priest or Usher Captain for safekeeping.
5. Check each Holy Water receptacle at each entryway into the Church to make sure that there is a sufficient amount of Holy Water in each. If one needs to be refilled carefully take it to the Baptismal Font located in the front left of the Church and refill and return it to its proper place.. If a parishioner needs Holy Water please direct them to the Baptismal Font at the front left of the Sanctuary.
6. Assist with seating as necessary. Point out places for wheelchairs when appropriate; wheel chairs can only be parked where the space is designated not blocking any aisle..
7. Select the gift bearers and give them any necessary instructions. When choosing the gift bearers, remember that they represent the whole assembly and should reflect the diversity of the assembly.
8. Meet, Greet and Seat parishioners.
Gathering Rite

1. Once the entrance procession has completed and the Celebrant greets the assembly, close all the Church doors. It is appropriate that at least three ushers stay in the Vestibule during this time to inform people that we are waiting for the proper time for them to enter the worship space. (See Figure 2).

2. For those latecomers, have them wait in the Vestibule during the Opening Prayer. Following that prayer, assist if necessary or have them find seats prior to the beginning of the first reading.

Liturgy of the Word

1. During the Liturgy of the Word, to show respect for the Word of God among us, the following are the only appropriate times to allow people to find seats:
   ♦ Between the 1st reading and the Psalm,
   ♦ Between the Psalm and the 2nd reading,
   ♦ Following the 2nd reading, and
   ♦ Following the reading of the Gospel, before the homily begins.
   Do not allow people to enter the worship space during any of these readings.

2. It is important to gently ask latecomers to remain in the Vestibule until the appropriate pause so that they do not distract the assembly from their worship.

3. One Usher should be at each aisle entry point of the worship space to be able to facilitate this process.

4. After the Gospel the Ushers should take their designated seats in the Sanctuary.

Collection of Gifts

1. Once the Prayers for those who have died are mentioned, which is the signal for the ushers to proceed down each aisle (See Figure 3) the four Ushers, one Usher at each of the four aisles will proceed in unison down each aisle to the front pews of the Church with reverence to the altar and bow. When everyone has been seated, the ushers, with the collection baskets in hand will start the collection towards the back of the Church. Once the ushers get to the end of their aisle please pass the basket through the Vestibule area. The Ushers then will bring their collection baskets to the counter of the Vestibule and place the Gifts in the Large Collection Gift basket.

2. After all of the collection has been consolidated into the Large Collection Gift basket, the Usher designated to bring the collection basket to the Church safe will wait at the center aisle for the Usher that has been designated to retrieve the Gift Table. They will proceed together down the center aisle. The Usher retrieving the Gift Table will pick it up and take the Gift Table back to the Vestibule to its proper place. The Usher
with the Gift Basket (holding the Gift Basket with both hands) will continue to the first step to the Altar, bow and proceed left to sacristy and place the money bag in the Church safe. The Usher will then leave the sacristy through the rear door and proceed around the outside of the Church to the Vestibule and place the Gift basket on the counter. He will then retrieve the bank money bag for the next Mass and place it in the Large Collection Gift Basket and return to his seat.

**Sign of Peace**

After the Lord's Prayer each Usher shall exchange the Sign of Peace with parishioners along the aisle of the sections they are serving. Upon reaching the vestibule the Ushers should exchange the Sign of Peace with the parishioners in the vestibule and among themselves. At the conclusion of the Sign of Peace the Ushers shall take their places in the center aisle and awaits the beginning of the Communion Procession.

**Communion Procession**

1. All four Ushers should be at the center aisle at the entrance to the Sanctuary, 2 Ushers on the left and 2 Ushers on the right, one in front of the other (See Figure 4). If there are only two Ushers available, then 1 Usher on the left and 1 Usher on the right. Once the fraction rite has occurred and the priest has taken communion, while the Extraordinary Ministers are taking communion all Ushers shall proceed to the first pew in front of the Altar, bow and wait the until the Priests and Extraordinary Ministers are taking their positions to give Communion (See Figure 4). At that time the 2 Ushers in front shall take their positions, one on the outside of each Priest and at least 3 feet away from each Priest (See Figure 4). The Ushers that are positioned by the Priests shall observe the taking of Communion by the parishioners and be aware that the person has consumed his or her Communion immediately after it was offered by the Priest or Extraordinary Minister. In the event that a parishioner did not consume the Body of Christ and proceeds away to his or her seat, the Usher shall walk to the particular person and ask them gently to consume the Body of Christ. After the person has complied the Usher shall return to his or her position. In the event that a Host falls to the floor or the Blood of Christ is spilled, the Usher shall immediately inform the Presiding Priest, if he does not observe the event, and follow the instructions of the Priest. They should also discreetly direct the parishioners as they come forward for Communion to the Priest or Extraordinary Minister on their side to ensure that the communion line does not back up and stop.

2. The 2 remaining Ushers at the front pews shall start letting the parishioners leave the pews to receive Communion at the same time that the 2 front Ushers have taken their positions at the side of each Priest.

3. The communion procession will occur in the center aisle and people will return to their seats via the far right and left side aisles once they have received communion.
4. The Ushers receive communion after the congregation. If anyone in your section requires that Communion be brought to him/her at their seat, inform both Extraordinary Ministers (the Bread and the Wine) when you come forward to receive.
5. Once you complete your role and have received communion yourself, return via the same route that the communicants return (down the far right and left aisles of the Church) and proceed to your seat via the vestibule.

Second Collection

If there is a Second Collection follow the same guidelines set forth above in the Collection of the Gifts. Proceed up the aisles to the front of the Church as soon as the celebrant and parishioners sit down after communion and begin the collection. Be sure an Usher remains with the Gift Basket until the end of the Mass and then the designated Usher will take the Gift Basket to the Church safe in the same manner as set forth in the Collection of the Gifts when the Mass has ended. This procedure should be performed only after the choir/assembly has finished singing and the procession has left the Church.

Concluding Rite

After the Post-Communion Prayer, at the reading of the Parish announcements by the Celebrant all the Ushers will take the Church bulletins to each of the four doors of the Church. In order to show reverence and respect to the Celebrant and the Procession, the Ushers at the two doors in the front of the Church will stand in front of each door with the bulletins at his or her side and will not open them until the Celebrant’s procession has progressed at least half way through the Church. If some parishioners need to leave early and want to use the door let them continue on their way. In no way is an Usher to encourage the parishioners to leave the Church early. After the Celebrant and the Procession has reached the middle of the Church, the Ushers at the front doors may open the doors for the parishioners and begin to hand out the Church bulletins. The Ushers at the 2 doors in the vestibule may also start handing out Church bulletins at the conclusion of Mass. (See Figure 5)

Following the Liturgy

1. Each of the four Usher’s will assist each other to check the pews for items that need to be removed after your Mass, i.e. bulletins, water bottles etc., please put back any songbooks and the Church Sunday Missal books into the book racks on the back of each pew. Also any personal or valuable items left by the parishioners place on the counter in the vestibule. Anything found of significant value should be given to a Priest or Usher Captain for safekeeping.
2. Straighten up the counters in the vestibule.
3. If the air conditioning is on please close all doors to the Church as to conserve energy and maintain a pleasant environment for the next Mass.

**Usher Check List**

- **Arrival:** 15-20 minutes before start of Mass
- **Check in:** Make sure you have your Church issued Usher badges on.
- **Outside Doors:** Open the doors at each end of the vestibule as a sign of welcoming as parishioners arrive. (Only if the air conditioning is off)
- **Housekeeping (before Mass):** See "Following the Liturgy" page 21, #1
- **Plastic Money Bag:** Put the plastic bank money bag (plastic money bags are kept in the Usher's Room) into the Large Collection Basket on the counter.
- **Gift Table:** Take the Gift Table to the front of the Sanctuary and place it approximately halfway down the main aisle.
- **Taking of the Gifts:** Select parishioners to take the Gifts to the Priest during the Preparation of the Gifts.
- **Lookout:** Be aware of any parishioners who wish to receive the Body and Blood at their pew; select people to present the gifts
- **Offertory:** Take up the collection (see procedure located in this Handbook)
- **Eucharist:** Direct parishioners to the appropriate Eucharist Location (see procedure located in this Handbook)
- **Recession:** Open main inside doors and main outside doors (see procedure located in this Handbook)
- **Housekeeping (after Mass):** See "Following the Liturgy" on page 21, #1

**Head Usher**

The responsibilities of the Head Usher are to schedule yearly Head Usher meeting with all the Ushers. The Head Usher is responsible for attending Liturgy Commission meetings, compiling the schedules from the Usher Captains, maintaining an Usher data base, communicating with all Ushers where pertinent information is concerned pertaining to the
Usher Ministry, and updating the Minister of Hospitality (Usher) Handbook as needed and to provide an Usher Badges to new Ushers. He/she is also an active Usher. To assist the Usher Captains in the training of recruits and scheduling of his/her team. The schedule is then to be forwarded to the Pastor. The Head Usher also keeps the Pastor apprised of any issues that arise pertaining to the Ministry.

**Assistant Head Usher(s)**

The Assistant Head Usher(s) is selected by the Head Usher and is also an Usher Captain. The responsibilities of the Assistant Head Usher are to assist the Usher Captains in training, recruitment and randomly attending other Masses other than his or her own Mass to observe and help as necessary. The Assistant Head Usher also attends special Masses such as the Easter Vigil and Christmas Masses. He or she also attends Masses that are in need of special help in recruiting and training.

**Usher Captain**

The Usher Captain is the Usher in charge of the other Ushers at the assigned Mass. He or She is selected by the Head Usher and is responsible for having all his assigned Ushers follow the guidelines set forth in this Usher's Handbook. The Usher Captain's duties also include following:

1. To set an example for his fellow Ushers and Parishioners by his dress, demeanor, attitude, friendliness.
2. Assisting the Priest's when needed.
3. Recruiting new Ushers for his or her Mass and having the new recruit fill out the Usher Information sheet and forwarding it to the Head Usher (See Figure 7).
4. To give the new Usher a copy of the St. John the Baptist Usher's Handbook.
5. Assigning his or her Ushers their duties at their Mass, i.e. select parishioners to take up the Gifts, retrieve the Gift Table, where they will be seated during Mass, which Ushers will be by the side of the Priests during Communion and which Ushers will let parishioners out for Communion.
6. Locating alternate Ushers and willing Parishioners to assist him or her in the collection and handing out Church bulletins when a regular Usher is not able to be at Mass.
7. In their training according to the guidelines set forth in this Usher Handbook.
8. To deviate from these guidelines as conditions dictate.

**In Case of Fire**

1. Fire and Evacuation Plan: When the fire alarm sounds, immediately search for a fire. If no fire is found, let the other Ushers know and reset the fire notification
alarm at the fire alarm panel located in (See Figure 6). If a fire is discovered, **Call 911** and evacuate the area. The Church address is located on the outside wall facing Baker Street in the front of the Church and on the Church bulletin. Fire extinguishers may be used to battle small fires. Do not risk being overcome by smoke or toxic fumes.

2. The fire alarms and extinguishers are located as follows: (See Figure 6).

3. The presiding Priest may request ushers to assist with removing the Blessed Sacrament from the Church.

4. Ushers should meet the fire truck and direct fire personnel to the fire. All Ushers should gather near the fire truck for additional instructions.

**First Aid and Medical Emergencies**

1. A first aid kit is located in the Priests Sacristy and the Ushers Room in the vestibule. Use it to assist parishioners with minor medical situations. (See Figure 6)

2. For medical emergencies, **call 911** for an ambulance. Our Church address is on the front page of the Church bulletins and on the outside front of Church facing Baker Street. One usher should meet ambulance and direct EMTs to the emergency. If the situation permits, the victim may be moved to the Bridal Room for privacy. All ushers are encouraged to become CPR trained.

**Restrooms and Drinking Fountains**

Restrooms and drinking fountains are located on the outside of the Church on the west side by the Parish Hall.

**Finding a Substitute**

If an usher cannot serve at his or her regularly scheduled Mass, he or she needs to contact his or her Usher Captain and inform him or her that he will not be able to serve at his or her scheduled Mass. It is recommended to give your Usher Captain as much advance notice as possible.

**Volunteer-Assignment Procedure for Special Occasions**

Several occasions like Holy Days of Obligation, Easter Week and Christmas Masses will require Ushers. Ushers may be needed for First Communion and Confirmation and Parishioners’ Funerals if requested by the Pastor. Ushers should anticipate serving at these special occasions. The Head Usher will contact the Ushers and coordinate scheduling
and give ushers the opportunity to select the Mass of their choice, first come - first served.

**Usher Handbook**

The St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Usher Handbook will be given to each current and new Usher. Copies of the Usher Handbook will be located in the Ushers Room in the vestibule.

**Usher Web Site**

This Usher Handbook and other information pertaining to the Usher Ministry is available online at www.sjboc.org
LEGEND:
P PRIEST
U USHER
S ALTER SERVER
A AMBO

BAKER STREET

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH 10/24/2007
CONCLUDING RITE-BULLETINS NO SCALE

(FIGURE 5)
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Minister of Hospitality-Usher

Usher Interest Form
PLEASE PRINT

Date: __________
Name: ______________________________ Retired: Y ____ N ____
Address: ____________________________

______________________________

Telephone # ________________ Cell ________________
Email Address: ________________________________

Would you like to receive Usher schedules and other information about the Ministry of Hospitality - Usher’s via email? ___ Y ____ N

I prefer to Usher at the following Mass:

5:00 P.M. Saturday Vigil ___ 8:00 A.M. ___ 9:30 A.M. ___ 11:00 A.M. ___ 12:30 P.M. ___

Please identify any other Liturgical Ministries for which you or a family member is involved:

Altar Server ____ Choir ____ EM ____ Lector ____ Greeter ____
Other ______________________________________

PLEASE RETURN TO AN USHER

Usher - please forward this Usher Interest Form to the Head Usher

(This Usher Interest Form is also available online at www.sjbo.org)

(FIGURE 7)