

GUIDELINES
ON THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY¹

Diocese of Pueblo

General Norms

Essential Duties

2010

¹ These guidelines treat ushers, greeters, and other similar ministries collectively as “hospitality ministers.”

On the Ministry of Hospitality

General Norms

Purpose:

1. Ushers, greeters, and other similar ministers' (collectively "hospitality ministers" from now on) primary function is serving the worshipping community² by
 - a. Extending hospitality to all those who come to worship
 - b. Aiding in the liturgy itself
 - c. Participating as a member of the community
 - d. Assisting in emergencies, disruptions, and special circumstances

Guiding Image: Hospitality

2. Often times, one's first contact in a parish is with a hospitality minister.
3. A minister's presence, attitude, and demeanor – or lack thereof – can make a difference in helping someone experience God's love and in enter into the Sacrament.³
 - a. Ministers should be available and accessible to all persons.
 - b. Ministers should display an attitude of welcome.
 - In a profound way, ministers therefore help to build up the community, the Church, and the Kingdom of God.
4. Hospitality ministers are a part of the community and an example to the community.

Ministers should:

- a. Actively participate in singing, responding, and praying
- b. Be attentive to the needs of individual worshipers.

² Lawrence E. Mick. *Guide For Ushers & Greeters*. (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1997), pg. 5.

³ Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. *Introduction to the Order of Mass*. (Washington DC: ICEL, 2003), par. 23.

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Qualifications:

5. The ministry of hospitality is not a restricted ministry. A variety of men, women, and youth should be encouraged to participate.
 - a. Physical and/or mental limitations do not disqualify one from at least exercising part of a ministry.
 - b. Care should be taken by pastors to ensure that these ministries are not restricted implicitly or explicitly for a particular group of people.

Pastoral Note: Reservations may be made, for example, on the occasion of a corporate mass for the Knights of Columbus or the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, or for a youth-led/children's mass.
 - c. The Diocese of Pueblo believes it *far superior* that a minister be assigned only to one ministry for a given period of time. This applies particularly to the major ministries of lector, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, server, and hospitality.

Conduct:

6. Any minister in the Church is a representative of the parish, of the diocese, and of the Church at large. He or she must conduct him or herself both inside and outside the context of liturgy in a manner congruent with the Catholic faith.

Attire:

7. A minister's dress must be appropriate, modest, and reflect the dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration.
 - a. The parish may establish a dress code for ministers.

Pastoral Note: Insofar as it is possible, hospitality ministers should be easily identifiable.

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Reverence:

8. “Hospitality is not simply a desire to be social or friendly.”⁴ Hospitality is an act of reverence that recognizes Christ’s presence in another and responds to it accordingly.
 - a. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* presents four ways in which Christ is present in the Eucharistic Celebration:
 - Christ is most especially present in the Eucharistic species;
 - He is present in the priest;
 - He is present in the Scriptures;
 - Christ is present in the assembly.⁵
 - b. Especially in light of Christ’s presence in the assembly, this ministry requires a response to all people – children, teens, adults, the elderly, the disabled, those who are mentally and/or physically ill – regardless of age, sex, appearance, economic or political status.
9. Within the church building, hospitality ministers show appropriate reverence with regard to the sacred space and the Blessed Sacrament.

⁴ Mick, pg. 9.

⁵ Vatican Council II. *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC). (Vatican: Pope Paul VI, 4 December 1963), par. 7.

Essential Duties

10. The duties of hospitality ministers will be largely determined by the particular parish where one serves. Typically a minister:
- a. Assists with greeting and welcoming people to liturgies
 - b. Assists people in finding a place to sit
 - c. Directs foot traffic when necessary
 - d. Hands out participation materials (worship aids, missalettes, etc.)
 - e. Takes up the collection and offerings
 - f. Assists in emergencies
 - g. Hands out bulletins

*Taking the Collection and Presenting the Offerings*⁶

11. Following the Prayers of the Faithful, the ministers come forward to take the collection.
- a. The ministers may bow to the altar together and begin the collection (a genuflection is not appropriate since the ministers would be carrying baskets).⁷
 - b. Sufficient ministers should be available to take up the collection so that the presentation of the offerings is not unduly prolonged.

Pastoral Note: The idea is not to rush through the collection, or any part of the liturgy. The idea is to avoid unnecessary and awkward pauses.

⁶ The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* refers only to the bread and wine as the “offerings.” The primary purpose of a monetary collection is to provide for the poor, the Church at large, and then the parish – see 12b.

⁷ ICEL. The English translation of the *Ceremonial of Bishops*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1989), par. 70.

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12. Parishes shall determine the manner in which people are selected to bring up the offerings and how they are to be presented.

Pastoral Note: To ensure the flow of the liturgy, those who bring the offerings forward should go to the “gift table” (usually in the back of the church) before the collection is taken and wait to come forward.

- a. The offerings are “brought to an appropriate place” and “accepted by the priest or the deacon.”⁸

Pastoral Note: When the Bishop presides, the gifts are brought to him at the chair.

- Hospitality ministers may not place the bread and the wine on the altar. This action “is restricted to the ordained.”⁹
- b. “Money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, should be received. These are put in a suitable place but away from the Eucharistic table.”¹⁰
 - Monetary offerings do not hold the same ritual significance as bread and wine and thus do not occupy a place of prominence in the immediate vicinity of the altar (i.e. directly in front of the altar).
 - The money is not to be “offered up” or blessed in a manner ritually equivalent to the bread and wine. It is placed in a dignified place in a dignified way.
 - c. The procession with the offerings is a significant and symbolic moment in the liturgy. However, it should not be overtly elaborate or ostentatious. As with all parts of the liturgy, it should adhere to the principle of “noble simplicity.”¹¹
 - d. After the gifts have been received, the ministers return to their places without ceremony.

⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The English translation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), (Washington DC: ICEL, 2003), par. 73.

⁹ Edward Foley, et al. Ed. *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Commentary), (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007), pg. 245-6; cf. GIRM, par. 73, 75, 140.

¹⁰ GIRM, par. 73.

¹¹ SC, par. 34.

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Communion

13. Ministers should see to it that those who wish to receive communion are directed to communion stations. This is especially useful at times when there are many people in the church.
 - a. The custom in the United States of dismissing rows to go to communion should be governed by pastoral sensitivity.
 - For one reason or another, a person may not want to go to communion.
 - He or she should not feel pressure to come forward even for a blessing.
 - b. Ministers should also be aware of their role in helping communion ministers locate those who cannot come forward for communion.
 - This practice should be governed with discretion and with respect for the sacredness of the moment.
 - Yelling and waiving should be altogether avoided.
 - It is recommended to have a reserved seating area available for those who cannot come forward for communion.

Special Circumstances, Emergencies, and Disruptions

14. At certain times during the liturgical year, additional assistance may be required to ensure a smooth and prayerful celebration.
 - a. Such circumstances (i.e. Holy Week, Christmas, etc.) may involve more ministers than usual and/or special instruction.
 - b. Communication between the pastor, pastoral staff, and hospitality ministers is essential to minimize distractions and disorder during these celebrations.
15. Crying/disruptive children are a natural part of parish life.
 - a. If a child becomes disruptive *to the point of hindering the Eucharistic Celebration*, a hospitality minister may need to approach the child's parent/guardian and respectfully offer to help.¹²

¹² Mick, pg. 46-7.

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16. In dealing with disruptive children or adults, it is important that hospitality ministers always approach the people involved with charity and do not call undue attention to the situation.
 - a. Some people may become defensive when offered help.
 - b. Some may be overwhelmed or embarrassed.
 - c. Some may not know what to do.
17. Approach a situation with care. If someone rejects assistance, leave it alone – it is not appropriate to give a lecture during mass, especially in an already embarrassing situation.
 - a. **A hospitality minister is never to take custody of another's child, never to discipline another person's child, and never to remove a child on the parent's behalf.**
 - b. The minister is to approach and inform the child's parent/guardian of the situation in a calm and polite manner (keep in mind note 16a).
 - c. In some circumstances the minister may need to inform the pastor as well.
18. Each parish shall determine proper protocol for addressing emergencies such as
 - a. fire
 - b. tornado
 - c. power-failure
 - d. medical emergency
 - e. kidnapping
 - f. theft
19. Parishes should consider
 - a. evacuation procedures
 - b. emergency contacts
 - c. safety precautions
 - d. sanitary materials to clean up bodily fluids
 - e. procedures to handle intoxicated or hostile persons
 - f. procedures to handle dangerous animals.

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Local Rules

20. These Guidelines provide general principles on this important ministry. For a smooth functioning of this ministry, the needs of the local faith community must be accounted. Examples of some local practices that need to be determined include:

- Scheduling
- Finding substitutes
- Grounds for removal from ministry
- Arrival times
- Sign-in sheets
- Use of distinctive signs of ministry (name tags, badges)
- Responsibilities before Mass
- Taking up and presenting the collection (and offerings)
- Responsibilities during Communion (directing persons and dismissal of pews)
- Number of Hospitality Ministers
- Emergency Protocol