

Guidelines for Ushers

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church
Aurora, Illinois

Questions?

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Scheduling and Dress

1. Schedules are made out three months at a time. If you can't attend a mass for which you have been scheduled, please use the phone list to arrange for a substitute. Each new schedule contains a Family Ministry Sheet on which you may indicate dates when you are unavailable. These can be dropped off at the parish office, placed in a collection basket, or you may e-mail the information to larry.harris@olmercy.org.
2. For dress, use the tennis shoe rule: if you could wear tennis shoes with your clothing, then it's too casual.

Procedures

3. Arrive 15 minutes before Mass begins and sign in. The sign in book is located in the hallway by the priest's sacristy. If you are filling in for someone please write their name in the "substitute for" column.
4. Please wear the "Usher" tags kept with the sign in book.
5. **Entrance Procession:** Mass will begin with the procession after the second bell has rung. One usher follows the procession, stopping at the back pew. This keeps people from using the center aisle until the Priest has reached the steps to the altar. People still entering the church may use the side aisles. Another usher closes the two center doors after the procession passes through and stands facing the parking lot. This usher then directs latecomers to the two side doors until the priest reaches the steps to the altar.
6. **The Narthex:** Once mass has started, be prepared for people who need help finding a seat. Invite those standing in the Narthex to come into the church and offer to help them. Unless there are no seats left in the church, please keep the volume control near the sign in book set at zero. Children should not be playing in or on the font (this is a liability issue for the church). If you see anyone sitting on the font, politely ask him or her to move to the benches by the doors. If someone is sitting on the window ledges in the church, please ask them to move.

7. **Collection:** Prior to Mass check that there are enough baskets (and a bag if needed) in the church. During the Profession of Faith (We believe in God, the Father Almighty...) the ushers pick up the baskets and take their places at the back of each aisle. Be sure that the baskets make it to every pew. When the priest has prepared the altar and is standing at the steps with the servers, put everything you've collected so far into the large basket. The water and wine are carried first, followed by the bread, then the large basket. Bring the rest of the collection forward during the Sign of Peace.
8. **Second Collection:** When there is a second collection, it is taken up immediately after the first. There will be a plastic bag to hold the second collection to keep it separate. The bags are kept in the usher's closet near the extra baskets. When there is a second collection, it will usually extend past the time when the gifts are presented.
9. **The Offertory Procession:** Usually, the greeters or another family will bring the gifts to the altar. If someone else has asked to bring up the gifts, there will be a note on the corkboard above the sign in book. If no one has asked, and there are no greeters, please ask a family to present the gifts. Usually, the ushers should not be the gift bearers, but may help if the family is too small to carry everything. Ask the family to walk up the center aisle, hand the gifts to the priest, and then step to the side. When all the gifts have been presented to the priest, they genuflect together and return to their seats. Send the gifts in the following order: water & wine, bread, then the collection.
10. **Communion:** Wait at the back of your assigned aisle until the Eucharistic ministers move into position, and then proceed to the front. Direct the people to communion one row at a time with the right side of the aisle forming one line and the left side of the aisle the other. The Narthex doors should be closed during communion. Those in the children's chapel should come down the center aisle to receive communion or a minister will go to them.
11. **Closing Song:** One usher stands in front of the center door leading into the narthex, keeping them closed and directing anyone leaving early to the side doors. As the procession approaches, the doors should be opened. The side doors should then be opened as well. The other ushers should stand in the narthex to distribute bulletins. Remember that you are the last person to interact with people before they leave. Your friendliness and smile can help to leave a good impression.

Useful Information

12. **Exits:** General use exits are located on the North and East walls of the Narthex only. Emergency exits are located in the four corners of the church, the East, North, and West walls of the Narthex, the cry room, ministry room and the Tabernacle area.
13. **Phones:** Emergency phones are located in the Priest's sacristy and the electrical room. A pay phone is located between the inner and outer doors at the North end of the Narthex.
14. **Restrooms:** These are located at the Northwest corner of the Narthex. Additional restrooms are located in the cry room, ministry room and the Tabernacle area.
15. **First Aid:** First aid equipment and a wheelchair are kept in the usher's closet.
16. **Alarms:** The church is equipped with two alarms: A system alarm which consists of an intermittent horn, sounding every 15 seconds. This is not an emergency situation, but indicates that there is a problem with the system, and a fire alarm, which is a continuous blast. In addition, strobe lights located close to each exit will flash. If you hear and see this alarm the church should be evacuated immediately.
17. **Fire Extinguishers:** In the worship area, fire extinguishers are located in wall mounted boxes at each of the four corners of the room. Another is located in the hallway by the restroom entrances. There are also wall mounted units in the work sacristy and in the kitchen area of the ministry room. A chemical fire extinguisher is kept in the electrical room by the server's sacristy to put out electrical fires.
18. **Forms and envelopes:** Parish registration forms, visitor collection envelopes, building fund envelopes are located on the table next to the entrance to the Priest's sacristy. Registration forms can be turned into the parish office or placed in the collection basket.