

# *A Guide for*



# *Ushers/ Greeters*

**Diocese of Prince Albert  
Liturgy Office**



(2017)

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**ALL  
ARE  
WELCOME**

*"Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality,  
for through it some have unknowingly  
entertained angels."*

*Hebrews 13: 1-2*

## Being an Usher / Greeter

“In the body of Christ there exists a wonderful variety of ministries, which are especially evident when we gather around the altar to worship God. By virtue of our baptism in Christ some of us are called to serve as ministers of the liturgical assembly:... Ushers provide welcome and dignified order to the celebration...” (Book of Blessings, #1858)



“Ushers and greeters welcome people and begin the process of forming them as a worshipping body.”

“Ushers and greeters have tasks to accomplish. They greet worshipers at the door. They help people find a place. They take up the collection. But these are not merely tasks on a checklist. They are ministries. And they require a minister’s heart.”

“A circular action takes place at every Mass. The people bring their gifts to be placed on the altar as a sign of their very selves. The gifts and the people are transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“You are helping people make the transition from worship into service. You send them forth renewed in Christ, looking for ways to bring Christ to a waiting world. The bulletins you give them signify their mission.”

(This section was taken from “Guide for Ushers and Greeters” by Ferrell and Turner)

## **A Form of Evangelization**

“Evangelization is “the carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race,” where it will bring strength and renewal. We all share this responsibility of bringing Christ to others.”

“You are the face of Christ, and your welcome will evangelize. When you are a greeter at church, you are the face of Christ, and you are receiving each guest as if he or she were Christ.”

(Quotations taken from “Guide for Ushers and Greeters” by  
Karie Ferrell and Paul Turner)

*“Jesus says, Whoever receives you receives me, and  
whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”*

(Matthew 10:40)

## **Part of a Team!**

*What you need to know:*

Know the layout of your parish

(washrooms, classrooms, supplies, etc.)

Are there specific parking rules?

Know any parish staff

(those who could answer questions that you  
may not know)

Know how to participate in the Liturgy

\* (while you have specific duties in the liturgy,  
your most important duty is the same as that of  
all the gathered assembly – to participate fully  
and consciously in the liturgy)

Know how to move reverently through the Church

Know how to do crowd control

Know how to deal with difficult people

## **Responsibilities**

Remember some parishes may use different terms for your job, some may be ushers, greeters or hospitality! Often these terms are interchangeable so make sure you understand what your ministry includes in your specific parish. The duties may also be shared between different groups depending on the size of your parish.

### ***Before the Liturgy***

- When to arrive
- Come prepared (Personal hygiene & Clothing)
- Badge or nametag (this may depend on your parish)
- Check the appearance of the Church (entrance and worship space)

### ***As the Assembly Gathers***

- Know your station
- Welcome the people
- Distribute any worship aids or things needed so everyone can fully participate in the celebration
- Seat people (Placement: parents with families, people with disabilities, late comers, overflow seating)

### ***During the Liturgy***

- Be a model of participation
- Be ready to assist with any processions, collection and or other duties depending on the celebration



### ***As the Assembly is Sent Forth***

- Saying Good-bye
- Know of any events following the Liturgy
- Distribute parish bulletins
- Know what happens with the Collection

### ***After the Liturgy***

- Clean up and prepare what's necessary for the next Celebration

### ***Special Circumstances***

\*Check with your parish about how to deal with disruptions. Be compassionate when disruptions occur and know how you should respond to emergencies.



“Be dependable! Show up every time you are scheduled to minister. The role of the usher and greeter is just as important and vital to the life of the parish as every other minister’s. After all, you are the first face people will associate with the Church when they arrive.”

“Some people are harder to welcome than others. But the doors of our churches are wide open. Christ welcomes even the stranger and the sinner.”

(Quotations taken from “Guide for Ushers and Greeters”  
by Farrell and Turner)

## Glossary

**Ambo:** The special lectern from which the scriptures are proclaimed in the *Liturgy of the Word*.

**Assembly:** The people gathered for worship; the congregation.

**Gifts:** The bread and wine, as well as the collection of money or donations for the poor.

**Hospitality:** The practice of being friendly and kind towards guests, of being hospitable, welcoming.

**Liturgy:** “The word ‘Liturgy’ originally meant a ‘public work’ or a ‘service in the name of/on behalf of the people.’ In Christian tradition it means the participation of the People of God in ‘the work of God.’” (Cf. John 17.4) (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1069). Liturgy includes the sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, and other rites and rituals, especially the celebration of the Mass.

**Narthex:** The space between the doors into the building and entry into the worship space; some parishes call this the gathering space.

**Rubric:** The rules, guidelines, and directions for the Mass and other liturgies. They are printed in red in the liturgical books.

**Sacristy:** The room where the sacred objects and other liturgical items and supplies are stored, cared for, and prepared for use.

**Sanctuary:** The place in the church where the altar, ambo, and presider’s chair are found.

**Tabernacle:** The place where the Body of Christ is reserved. It is usually in the shape of a box (though some may be rounded rather than rectilinear), and a sanctuary lamp, a candle, or oil lamp is placed nearby.

**Vestments:** Liturgical clothing worn by ministers in the liturgy; also altar coverings and cloths used in the Liturgy.

\*(This section was taken from the book ‘Guide for Ushers and Greeters’ by Farrell & Turner)



Thank you for your service at  
the Eucharist.

### **Food for Thought: “I’m just an Usher”**

Harry never even vaguely considered himself a minister in his church. “Some do,” he would say, “The people who give out the Eucharist, the ones who lector, maybe they are ministers, but me – I’m just an usher.”

Harry believed that, until one cold March night he came home from work and his wife told him the pastor had called. Harry returned the call and the pastor told him that a letter had been received at the rectory. The letter was simply addressed to “Harry, the Usher.” The priest said that, since he was the only usher called Harry, would he please pick up his letter. Harry, intrigued by the request, complied and on the way home ripped open the envelope and in the dim light of the car read the following:

*Dear Harry,*

*I don't know your last name, but I guess that's fair. You don't know mine either. I'm Gert, Gert from the 10:30 mass. I'm writing you for a couple of reasons, and I hope you will understand.*

*One of the reasons is to ask a favour. I am not particularly close to any of the priests in the parish but somehow I feel close to you. I don't even know how you got to know my first name, but every Sunday morning when I walked into mass you smiled and greeted me and called me by my name. We would exchange a few words that were perhaps meaningless to most, like how bad the weather was; how much you liked my Easter hat and how late I was on a particular Sunday.*

*I don't have any close family left, Harry. My husband has been dead for 16 years and the kids are scattered. Not too many people smile and greet an old lady like me, but you did.*

*Harry, in the little time left to me, I just wanted to say thank you. Thank you for your thoughtfulness; for remembering my name is Gert; for the smiles and the little laughter; the consideration and the conversation.*

*Now for the favour – I am dying, Harry. My time is running out. It is not important that you come to my wake, but what is important to me is that when they bring me to church for mass for the last time, you will be standing at the front entrance. It wouldn't seem right if you weren't standing there to say “Hello, Gert. Good to see you.”*

*If you are there, Harry, I will feel assured that your warm hospitality in my home parish will be duplicated by Peter, Jesus and Mary in my new parish, my new home. I hope they will say as you always did, “Hello, Gert. It is good to see you.”*

*With love and gratitude, Gert.*

The lady who wrote that letter recently was buried from her parish church. Harry did attend at the entrance. He smiled and said the words Gert wanted to hear as he gently touched the coffin. Harry had become a minister.

(The New Freeman, New Brunswick's Catholic Voice, July 13, 1985)