

Ushering Duties

Ushering duties at Holy Cross can be broken into three categories, Greeting, Ushering and Collecting. For most masses, the Usher will perform all these three functions. But During some special masses, others might perform the duties of Greeting or Collecting. Examples of this are when TYM or CCD students are assisting with the mass.

The Description of each and the duties performed by each will be discussed below.

Greeter

The *Greeter* is the first face that a parishioner at Holy Cross will see when attending Mass. Each Parishioner should be greeted in a warm and pleasant manner. Usually at the same time, the Sunday Bulletin will be offered. During Special Masses (like Christmas and Easter) the *Greeter* will be offering other Handouts like Mass Guides, Music, etc.

Duties

- Arrive approx. 30 minutes before Mass. (Earlier for Big Masses like Easter, Christmas...)
- Hand out Bulletins to Parishioners as they arrive
- Direct Parishioners as needed.
 - Men's/Lady's Room (upstairs and down)
 - Food Pantry Collection
 - Envelope Registration
 - Parish Registration
 - Any other special area (Rice Bowls collections, tickets to church events...)
- Look out for anyone needing special assistance, and direct them to an Usher for help in seating and/or anything else.
- When Greeting at a mass with Baptisms, direct the Baptism parents & godparents where to sit. (To the Right of the Altar, in the first Row). Also direct other baptismal family members to sit on the Tabernacle side of the church. (By the Emergency Exit Door).
- Be available at the end of Mass to "wish-off" parishioners, and to handout any special announcements.

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Usher

The main duties of an *Usher* are to direct and assist parishioners to available seats and to help direct the traffic flow during Communion. At most masses the Usher is doing the functions of Ushering, Greeting and Collecting. This should not present any problems.

Duties

Before Mass

- Arrive approx. 30 minutes before Mass. (Earlier for big Masses like Easter, Christmas...)
- Make sure front doors are unlocked. Usually the right front door is unlocked, but make sure that all four have been unlocked. If not, ask Father or someone inside for a key.
- Make Sure Church is Clean
 - Fold up Kneelers
 - Make sure Missals are stacked at end of Pews
 - Pick up any loose papers on floor/Pews/chairs
 - Remove any Bulletins from Pews & chairs
 - Make sure Cushioned Chairs are straight
- Place or make sure **Reserve** signs are on any seats/pews as required. (Like at Baptisms/ First Communion and Confirmation.)
- Gather the Usher tags in the Sacristy, and give to all Ushers/Collectors/Greeters helping at the mass.
- Bring out Father's Xylophone to the back of the Church, to the left center aisle planter stand.
- In Winter, check/turn on lobby heater fans
- Turn on lobby lights.
- Gather the Baskets and make sure there is enough for all the collectors. Most masses will have one collection, but once, sometimes twice a month, there will be a second collection. Baskets should be assembled underneath the Gifts table at the back of the Church hall on the west right side. During the times where there are three envelopes in the collection, Father will make an announcement that the 2nd and 3rd collections go into the 2nd basket, so only 2 baskets will be needed.
- Make sure that there are enough collectors for the mass. Recruit additional collectors, if necessary.
- Assist any parishioners to their seats, if needed. For those parishioners in wheelchairs, direct them to the left side of the church, and if they sit in a seat or pew, remove the wheelchair to the Choir wall or Confessional, as to not interfere with Communion.
- Notify the head EM of any 'special' communion requests.
- Check with the Head EM (Eucharistic Minister) to make sure that they have asked a family to bring up the gifts. Request that the EM 'Point-out' the family selected. If not, help in the selection of the Presenters of the Gifts. (Usher's to get family?)
- Check with Father on any last minute items/instructions.

During Mass

- Close the Doors to the Church if opened.
- Turn down lobby lights.
- For Major Masses like Easter and Christmas the Ushers will be needed to locate and walk parishioners to their seats. See *Special Considerations*, below.
- After the last parishioner has entered the church, and always before the Presentation of the Gifts, remove the Intention Basket from the Lobby and place on the Gifts table.
- Be available to assist any parishioners that might need assistance. Generally the back Foyer is the "Baby Room" of the church. You can direct any parent with an unwieldy youngster to that area. (Make sure that the inside doors are closed!)
- If there gets to be a long line at the men's or lady's room, you can remind the youngsters (it seems to be kids 99% of the time) that there are additional restrooms down stairs.

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- During the Presentation of the Gifts, one Usher should remain at the back of the church, and provide any assistance to those bringing up the gifts. The gifts are usually brought up after the collection has been completed, and transferred to the large gift baskets. Sometimes the gifts are brought up prior to the collection being finished, see *Special Considerations* below.
- Be cognizant of the hall temperature during mass (i.e., lots of people are fanning themselves), and open doors/windows if ventilation is needed.
- If temperature in lobby gets too hot, turn down/off lobby heater fans
- During Communion, make sure that traffic flow is correct.
 - At Baptisms, when many non-church members might be in attendance, inform them of the flow, and direct them as needed. Normally they will be seated on the tabernacle side of the church hall.
 - Make sure that tabernacle seaters proceed to communion with the Emergency Exit pew seaters.
 - During Major Masses, see *Special Considerations*, below.
 - Monitor length of communion queues. Since the side aisle communion queues seem to be longer than the center aisle queues, when all parishioners in center aisle have queued, start on the sides from the back, directing them to the center. This is normally needed on the tabernacle (right) side, as there are more seats there, than on the Choir side. It is almost never done in reverse, as the EMs have been instructed to automatically rotate to the center aisle once the side aisle queues are finished.

After Mass

- After Father's Concluding Rite ("Go in Peace..Thanks be to God"), open the inside Foyer Doors, and outside Doors (if weather permits) and turn up lobby lights.
- In winter, turn on/up lobby heater fans.
- Be available to assist any parishioners that might need assistance.
- Bring Wheelchairs back to parishioners, if moved.
- Clean up church
 - Fold up Kneelers
 - Make sure Missals are stacked at end of Pews
 - Pick up any loose papers on floor/Pews/chairs
 - Recycle any Bulletins from Pews & chairs for next mass.
 - Make sure Cushioned Chairs are straight
- Remove the Collection basket(s) and intention basket from the Altar.
 - Bring into Sacristy
 - Put contents of collection into plastic bags that Father has on bench.
 - If more than one collection, keep segregated.
 - Place on Father's "counter" or into his bag.
 - Place empty collection baskets back underneath Gifts table at back of church.
 - Place Intention basket on table in lobby. (Keep intentions in basket until after the 10:30am Sunday mass. After the 10:30 leave intentions for Father.)
- Return Usher tags to designated area.
- Check with Father prior to departure, making sure that there is nothing additional needed.

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Collector

The main duties of the collector are to assist in the passing of the offering baskets. For most masses, either four or five collectors are needed, depending on how crowded the mass is. There are five collection areas in the hall which are (starting on the left), Left (Confessional side), Left Center, Right Center, Right side (Vestry side) and the Tabernacle Area. The Left (Confessional) and Right (Vestry) sides are the long pews that are at a 45-degree angle with the center pews. The tabernacle area consists of two sets of seats, in front of the tabernacle (6-foot pews) and in front of the Emergency Exit (on the immediate right side of the altar, the twelve-foot pews).

Duties

- Assemble at the back of the church near the Gifts table during the *General Intercessions / Prayer of the Faithful*. This assembly place may change during Major Masses. See *Special Considerations*, below.
- At the conclusion of the Intercessions, proceed to the top (rear) of your designated aisle
- Once **ALL** Collectors are in place, proceed down the aisle and at the bottom (front) of the aisle and pause. One collector will be on the left Aisle, two in the center, and one or two on the right side. The second on the right being the collector for the tabernacle seats.
- In unison bow.
- Pass the first basket to the first person in the pew. Generally the first collection is the weekly collection, and the second is the monthly or special collection.
- Once the first basket has traveled down the pew and into the one behind it, pass out the second basket. The reason that this is important is that some people believe that there is One collection, with two baskets. By delaying the second basket, we hope to get the point across that there are **TWO** different collections, with two different purposes.
- The Collector will then monitor the collection baskets, and gradually backup the aisle, staying even with the baskets.
- This gives Father, the Usher(s) and the Presenters of the Gifts, an idea of how far the collection has progressed.
- Once the collection for that area is finished, the collectors proceed to the back of the church to the gifts table and deposit the collection into the presentation baskets. One Usher will have remained here and will assist. This assembly place may change during Major Masses. See *Special Considerations*, below.
- Once the Gifts have been presented to Father, the Collectors can return to their seats.

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Special Considerations

During high volume masses (like Easter and Christmas), some additional considerations arise.

Adding additional chairs

The existing pews in the church hall will accommodate between 360 (at 2 foot of pew space per person) to 460 (at 1.5 feet of pew space per person). There are also some 52 cushioned chairs, giving a nominal seating capacity of between 360 to 460 people. This is exclusive of the Choir

To accommodate the additional parishioners that are expected at these masses, folding chairs will be setup in the church hall. The church has some 240 folding chairs that are in the basement, used for the CCD classes. There will be assembled in the church hall and in the foyer, if necessary. They can be placed on the roller frames, and wheeled around the sidewalk from the back downstairs entrance to the main front entrance.

These additional chairs will necessitate the removal of the four literature tables, father's table (left back) and the Gifts Table (right back) of church. These can be placed in the Vestry. The four literature (plant) stands should also be removed, and can be placed in the lobby. This will make room for some 70 chairs to be set up in the back of the church hall, from the last pew to the glass doors, leaving the center aisle and two diagonal aisles progressing from the Glass Doors to the side aisles.

A row of chairs can be placed all around the outside walls of the hall, from the parking lot walls of the Vestry and Confessional all the way down past the stained glass windows. A total of about 40 chairs can be placed in this area, for a total of about 80 chairs total.

The single row of cushioned chairs on the right of the altar, can be moved to the left of the altar, making a third row in front of the existing two rows that already exist in front of the choir. This frees up a triangular area to the right of the altar that can contain approx. 4 rows of some fifty chairs.

The kneelers in front of the tabernacle can be removed to the vestry, and two rows of 4 chairs each can be put in their place. In front of the St. Joseph Stained Glass light, a single row of 6 chairs can be placed.

This will use up some 215 of the 240 chairs that we have available to us. This leaves about 25 'extra' chairs that can be set up as needed in the lobby for additional seating.

This gives a total of 600 to 700 seats in the church hall, for a listed capacity of 500.

Gift Table

Because of the placement of the folding chairs and the removal of all tables at the back of the church, there will be no normal Gifts table at the back of the church. During these masses, the Gifts (Bread and Wine) will be placed on a small table that is placed by the Usher in the center aisle **after** the Entrance and Father has processed down the aisle. The table will be kept in the lobby or in the closet until it is needed. A pair of EMs for that mass will hold the Bread and Wine in the Pew, until after the Procession and the table is placed in the aisle.

The family that is Presenting the Gifts will meet at and process to the altar from this table. The table will be removed by the Usher after the gifts are being presented to make room for communion, and placed back in the lobby or closet.

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Since the normal Gifts table is not present at the back of the church, the Collectors will meet with the Usher(s) at a pre-defined area at the back of the church to transfer the collection from the individual baskets to the Presentation Baskets.

Collection Speed-up

To speed-up the mass, the Usher will have the family Present the Gifts, prior to the collection being completed. This will allow the mass to proceed, instead of waiting for all the additional people present to make their offering. After the Offering has been transferred to the Presentation Baskets, a single Usher or Collector will then proceed down the Aisle to place the Offering and the Intention Basket under the Altar.

New Tabernacle Communion Wine Station Relocation

(This is only applicable to masses that have four communion stations.)

To accommodate the extra traffic, speed up the right side of the church and to prevent the flow of parishioners behind the Communion Stations, there will initially be two communion stations on the right side of the altar, by the Tabernacle. One set of EMs will be used for the parishioners seated in the Chapel and Exit door pews, and the other set will be for the parishioners seated in the Right Diagonal area. Two Communion lines will form in the aisle in front of the Exit Door, the left most line rotating to the right, and the left rotating to the left.

Father will be handling the Host communion station on the center aisle by himself, until the Tabernacle side finishes, and the EMs there join him. There should still be two communion lines in the center aisle.

When all the parishioners seated in the Tabernacle area (in front and to the right of the Exit Door) go to Communion, the EM station on the right, will relocate to Father's left (right side of the altar) to help with the Communion lines in the center aisle. An Usher should be last in this line, to let the EMs know that they should relocate.

Baptisms

Generally the Ushers should arrive some 40 minutes prior to mass when a baptism is held.

Usually the Baptismal Coordinator will show up some 15-30 minutes prior to mass.

- Introduce yourself to the family, when they arrive, as the Usher for that mass.
- Ushers/Greeters should be on the lookout for 'new faces'. Welcome them and ask if they are there for the baptism. If so, direct them to seats behind the family in the tabernacle (reserved) area. (In front of the 'right side' exit door.
- Check with the Baptism Coordinator to see if the family is going to be bringing up the gifts. Usually the Baptismal coordinator has discussed this with the family, and they have already decided. If so ask them to send those people over to go over the procedure. If not, notify the EM Captain that they still need to pick a family
- Inform the family that they can take their seats and get settled, but for them to return to the back of the church hall a few minutes before mass begins (when Father heads back) for the procession. The parents and godparents should sit in the first row.
- Notify any family members that have cameras (still or video) that the first row of padded seats on the right has been reserved for them. This offers the best views for those shots. Also notify them that father **does not** like video to be taken of the entire mass.
- Just prior to the beginning of the mass, Father, the parents and godparents will bless the child at the back of the church. Close the inside doors, and hold all late arrivals at the back of the church until after they have all processed down the aisle. Explain that there is a baptism, and that they can enter after the procession. Thank them for their cooperation.

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Appendix

(From <http://ceisites.com/spiritual/information/astm.html>)

Genuflection

Catholics only kneel or genuflect to Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. In the Roman Rite, genuflecting to the tabernacle, whenever Jesus is reserved in the tabernacle, is required. Bowing is not an option in the Roman Rite (age and disabilities are an exception.) Whenever He is present on the altar after the Consecration or exposed for Eucharistic adoration a double genuflection is required when entering or exiting the church or sanctuary. Everyone, servers included, should genuflect whenever crossing in front of the tabernacle, or entering a pew, when Jesus is really present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist, either on the altar or in the tabernacle. His presence in the tabernacle is usually signified by the light sanctuary lite. When it is not lit, the tabernacle is empty as on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The Catechism of the Catholic Church provides for bowing to Our Risen Lord but that is only applicable for the profound bow used in the other Rites of the Catholic Church.

When should a server genuflect? Whenever entering a church pew, the sanctuary or crosses in front of the tabernacle, they should face the tabernacle and genuflect. "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!" and "At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bend." Servers should remember that there is an exception to this. Whenever they are carrying things like crosses, sacred vessels, books or candles do not genuflect.

When He is reserved in the tabernacle He is just as present as when present on the Altar in the monstrance.

In the Roman Rite bowing is done for a priest, the altar or the cross. Catholics never genuflect to the altar or cross. When the tabernacle is not centrally aligned to the altar, one should bow to the altar when passing in front of it. If entering the sanctuary in procession and all genuflect be sure to face the tabernacle so as not to confuse the less informed parishioners. It has been noted that many people are starting to believe that genuflecting to the altar or crucifix is appropriate - it is not.

When He is reserved in the tabernacle He is just as physically present as He is in Heaven, on the Altar or in the monstrance for adoration.

- When the tabernacle is closed and Jesus is not present on the Altar after the consecration or exposed for Eucharistic Adoration, genuflect in this manner: stop, then turn and face the tabernacle. Genuflect on the right knee so the right knee touches the floor. Pause with the knee on the floor and bow your head to Jesus. Rise from the floor, still facing the tabernacle. Turn and continue in the direction you were heading.
- When the Body of Jesus is present on the Altar or Jesus is exposed in the monstrance during Eucharistic Adoration and a server (or anyone is entering or leaving the church) genuflect in this manner: stop and face Jesus. Double genuflect with both knees touching the floor, the right knee first. Pause with knees on the floor and bow your head to Jesus. Rise from the floor, still facing the tabernacle. Turn and continue in the direction you were heading.

Bowing

In the Roman Rite bowing is reserved for the Altar, the crucifix and the priest. We do not genuflect or kneel to any person or thing except our God. The Catholic Catechism allows for bowing in consideration for the Eastern Rites which perform a profound bow instead of the Roman Rite's genuflection. Genuflection is the norm of the Roman Rite and bowing should not be substituted unless directed by your pastor or bishop. This does not apply when specific physical conditions prevent your genuflecting. Every action of the server has an effect on the parishioners' faith. What would someone think if they saw an altar server genuflecting to a cross or statue?