

MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY



The Hospitality of St. Julian
(c.1615), by Cristofano Allori (1527-1621)



Catholic Church

In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him, and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come a long way."

And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these men with bread here in the desert?" And he asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven."

And he commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish; and having blessed them, he commanded that these also should be set before them.

And they ate, and were satisfied; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people.

--Mark 8: 1-9

Introduction:

With this guide for hospitality ministers, Sacred Heart Church hopes to direct the efforts of our community at the Liturgy toward an even greater sense of welcoming. Hospitality is a holy virtue which every Christian is called to witness every day of his life, for it is in welcoming the guest or stranger that we act as Christ did when he asked the multitude to be seated and he fed them.

CREATING SPACE FOR STRANGERS

Living in a World of Strangers

The first characteristic of the spiritual life is the continuing movement from loneliness to solitude. Its second equally important characteristic is the movement by which our hostilities can be converted into hospitality. It is there that our changing relationship to ourself can be brought to fruition in an ever-changing relationship to our fellow human beings. It is there that our reaching out to our innermost being can lead to a reaching out to the many strangers whom we meet on our way through life. In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture and country, from their neighbors, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found. Although many, we might even say most, strangers in this world become easily the victim of a fearful hostility, it is possible for men and women and obligatory for Christians to *offer* an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast *off* their strangeness and become our fellow human beings. The movement from hostility to hospitality is hard and full of difficulties. Our society seems to be increasingly full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people anxiously clinging to their property and inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy to suddenly appear, intrude and do harm. But still that is our vocation; to convert the *hostis* into a *hospes*, the enemy into a guest and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced.

-From *Reaching Out* by Henri Nouwen ©
Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1975

A Biblical Term

At first the word “hospitality” might evoke the image of soft, sweet kindness, tea parties, bland conversations and a general atmosphere of coziness. Probably this has its good reasons since in our culture the concept of hospitality has lost much of its power and is often used in circles where we are more prone to expect a watered down piety than a serious search for an authentic Christian spirituality. But still, if there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality. It is one of the richest biblical terms that can deepen and broaden our insight in our relationships to our fellow human beings. Old and New Testament stories not only show how serious our obligation is to welcome the stranger in our home, but they also tell us that guests are carrying precious gifts with them, which they are eager to reveal to a receptive host. When Abraham received three strangers at Mamre and offered them water, bread and a fine tender calf, they revealed themselves to him as the Lord announcing that Sarah his wife would give birth to a son (Genesis 18: 1-15). When the widow of Zarephath offered food and shelter to Elijah, he revealed himself as a man of God offering her an abundance of oil and meal and raising her son from the dead (1 Kings 17: 9-24). When the two travelers from Emmaus invited the stranger, who had joined them on the road, to stay with them for the night, he made himself known in the breaking of the bread as their Lord and Saviour (Luke 24: 13-35).

When hostility is converted into hospitality then fearful strangers can become guests revealing to their hosts the promise they are carrying with them. Then, in fact, the distinction between host and guest proves to be artificial and evaporates in the recognition of the new found unity. Thus the biblical stories help us to realize not just that hospitality is an important virtue, but even more that in the context of hospitality guest and host can reveal their most precious gifts and bring new life to each other.

During the last decades, psychology has made great contributions to a new understanding of interpersonal relationships. Not only psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, but also social workers, occupational therapists, ministers, priests and many others working in the helping professions have made grateful use of these new insights in their work. But maybe some of us have become so impressed by these new findings that we have lost sight of the great wealth contained and preserved in such ancient concepts as hospitality. Maybe the concept of hospitality can offer a new dimension to our understanding of a healing relationship and the formation of a recreative community in a world so visibly suffering from alienation and estrangement. The term hospitality, therefore, should not be limited to its literal sense of receiving a stranger in our house, although it is important never to forget or neglect that, but as a fundamental attitude toward our fellow human being, which can be expressed in a variety of ways.

Roles of the Hospitality Ministers

The ministry of Hospitality is an extremely important one. You are the first person most people see when they enter the church for Mass, therefore your dress should be in keeping with the dignity of the sacrament, that is to say, no jeans or t-shirts. The way you greet first-time visitors as well as long time parishioners to Sacred Heart Church can leave a lasting impression and set the stage for a positive experience in the Liturgy.

Your most important role is to make a person feel welcome just as you would welcome someone into your home.

Remember to greet the children, as they are an important part of the assembly. You can do this by smiling and saying hello or shaking hands. Remember, to visitors, you *are* Sacred Heart parish. Do your part to make people feel at home.

- **WELCOME** the members of the community to our celebration at the church doors as they arrive.
- **BE ATTENTIVE** to the community before, during and after the liturgy to assist in:
 - Finding seats at crowded Masses
 - Reserving seats and guiding people to their reserved seats
 - Assisting in Emergencies
- **TAKE UP COLLECTION** during Mass
- **ASSIST** with Communion processions as necessary to keep the traffic flow smooth and orderly and ensure that all who want to receive communion will do so with ease.
- **ANSWER QUESTIONS**
- **PROVIDE** a warm and hospitable environment by
 - Being sure the church is clean, neat, and orderly to welcome guests to the House of the Lord.

PROCEDURES

PREPARATION BEFORE MASS:

- 1) Arrive at least **twenty (20)** minutes prior to Mass.
- 2) Obtain a minister/greeter lapel pin from Usher drawer in the Sacristy
- 3) Sign in at the Minister Sign-in table in the narthex
- 4) Know which section you will be responsible for before Mass begins. The church is divided into sections which are numbered. The map is kept in the back of the church near the volunteer sign-in book.
- 5) Check in with team captain for any last minute instructions or information about the liturgy.
- 6) Check over your section and be sure that:
 - a) All kneelers are up
 - b) All books and papers are neatly placed in proper racks
 - c) All trash is removed
 - d) When needed, verify that there are enough hymnals of worship aids in every pew in your section.
 - e) Proceed to the narthex about 10 minutes before Mass starts to pray with the clergy and other liturgical ministers. Then go to your assigned section to begin greeting, seating and assisting parishioner. Focus your attention on warmly greeting people and assisting people as needed.
 - f) As church begins to fill, assist in finding seating, filling up the front pews first. You should make an effort to greet parishioners who are seated in your assigned section. The balcony gate should be unlocked by the team captain when it is needed. Do not unlock balcony for just a few people.

7) Team Captain

- i. ... Should decide when to unlock the balcony.
- ii. ... Should remain in narthex and also greet people as they come in, confer with Presider, Sacristan and/or Director of Liturgy and Music for any last minute instructions.
- iii. ...Should recruit a different family to bring up the gifts and instruct them to come to the back when they see the first collection baskets are passed around. **Make sure not to ask the same parishioners every weekend.**
- iv. ...Should instruct those bringing up the gifts to process in with the bread and wine when priest has come down from the altar and is standing in front. At the weekend Masses, the altar servers go to the back of the church to accompany the selected family in the procession with the gifts.

DURING MASS

POSTURE AND PARTICIPATION

- 1) Ministers are members of the worshipping community. Once the celebration has begun, ministers should participate fully in the liturgy, singing hymns, praying the prayers, and being attentive to the readings, except when needed in a specific ministry function which should still be carried out prayerfully.
- 2) At least one minister should remain at the back of their section until the collection.
- 3) During the readings and after the collection, most ministers can participate with their families for the rest of the liturgy while still attentive to parishioners who might need assistance.
- 4) Any strategy huddles with the rest of the ministers should take place before Mass. Avoid all unnecessary discussion during Mass.

SEATING THE ASSEMBLY

- 1) Folding chairs in the narthex should be used as a last resort. Please warmly encourage folks to join the celebration inside the church and point out empty seats to them.
- 2) **However, never force anyone to move, including asking people to move to the center of the row to allow for others.** Always be kind and respectful to everyone.
- 3) After the Gathering song, it is acceptable to seat people:
 - a) During the Gloria;
 - b) Just after the Opening Prayer when the assembly begins to sit down. (not during the prayer);
 - c) Gospel Acclamation
 - d) **Wait until after the scripture readings (including the responsorial psalm) to continue seating people so as not to distract from the word of God.**
 - e) During the homily, you may point out empty seats to latecomers from the back. Do not actively seat them.

COLLECTION

- 1) Collection (s)
 - a) Begins promptly after the General Intercessions. Start each basket in first row of each section immediately. Do not wait for music to begin.
 - b) During the collection, the Ministers should face the altar.
 - c) Second collections will be taken in the Blue baskets. The blue baskets will be passed after all the brown baskets are returned. **Do not pass them together.**
 - d) When both the baskets have been circulated through your section, take them to the narthex and empty them in to the large brown basket.

- e) The first minister to arrive will stand holding large collection basket in front of him/her so the Captain can attend to the family bringing up the gifts.
- f) After emptying your basket into the large basket, step aside to allow the next minister to empty his, and place your empty basket on the sign in table.
- g) Second collection offerings should not be mixed with the regular collection.
- h) If there is a second collection, place the entire second collection into the blue basket –which will be on the credence table.
- i) The collection should be taken as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- j) The people's gift is a special offering. The minister should keep his eyes on the basket at all times. Unfortunately some parishes have experienced thefts.
- k) Parishioners should not make change from the basket.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS (PROCESSION)

- a) Ministers should avoid bringing up the gifts themselves unless occasionally doing so with their families. **Find a new family to bring up the gifts each week.** This is an important means of offering our gifts from the community at large, rather than relying on the faithful ones who've done it many times.
- b) Families chosen by the team captain before the Mass to offer the gifts should be instructed to come to the narthex when they see the first baskets being passed.
- c) While the Candle bearers and Cross bearer move to the back of the church, the gift bearers should get ready to process in.

- d) The team captain is responsible to have the gift bearers lined up and waiting for the altar servers.
- e) The procession should begin as soon as the altar servers are positioned in front of the line! The large collection basket may be brought forward at a later time by either the team captain or a designated minister during the preparation of the gifts once the collection has completed.
- f) Do not delay bringing up the gifts to wait on a collection basket.

COMMUNION

- 1) Please be attentive to the special needs of elderly people and those with disabilities at all times during the liturgy. If they need communion to be brought to them, inform the assigned Eucharistic Minister to come to the appropriate place.
- 2) While the clergy is distributing Holy Communion to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at the sanctuary, the hospitality ministers should proceed to their assigned section. Facing the altar, stand beside the first row to direct the people to the communion lines. Occasionally, it is helpful to direct people to shorter lines, etc. Please use your judgment in doing so.
- 3) Ministers may stand at the end of the line to receive communion.
- 4) If you have been alerted by someone with special needs in your section, you may then take the Eucharistic minister to that individual.

OTHER CONCERNS DURING THE LITURGY

- 1) Always be aware of what is going on around you. It is important that you always be on guard for health issues, accidents, or other unexpected occurrences.
- 2) If there is a problem with the temperature in the church, bring it to the attention of the Sacristan.
- 3) Check the restrooms periodically for unusual activity or problems.
- 4) All Hospitality Ministers are asked to keep order during Mass. If you notice loud talking, horseplay, etc., during Mass, kindly ask the person or persons to stop.
- 5) That being said, it is important to remember to accentuate the positive in any conversation. Kindness and politeness is essential. Examples:
 - a. Negative: “ You kids need to shut up”
Positive: “We need your help, would you help us to promote silence in the church?”
 - b. Negative: “ You folks have to move, you’re blocking the entrance”
Positive: “Would you, folks please move over here where the crowd won’t interfere with your conversation?”

Immediately *following* the final blessing:

- 1) Go to the doors to **distribute the bulletins personally** (one per family), bidding a friendly good-bye to adults and children. **BE SURE TO TAKE THE EXTRA BULLETINS** back to the narthex! Not having the bulletins out before the Mass will help the people to focus on the liturgy and not be reading the bulletin.
- 2) Open the doors or prop them open after the sending forth song is over **UNLESS** the weather condition is bad as on a rainy or windy day, cold season, or hot summer.

- 3) As the ministers process out, the **team captain** accompanied by the **Sacristan** immediately takes the collection basket from the sanctuary to the sacristy. A 2nd Minister of Hospitality joins them to properly log in and deposit the offering in the safe together. This should be done quickly and the door should be locked while placing it in safe.

AFTER MASS

- 1) Check the pews for lost items. Lost items should be taken to the sacristy and placed in the lost and found drawer. If the item is too big to fit in the drawer, place it in the usher's closet.
- 2) Straighten up pews, put kneelers up and arrange hymnals if necessary, etc. Remove trash from pews and hymnal pockets.
- 3) Hospitality Captain, Sacristan and one other Hospitality Minister place the collection proceeds in the appropriately marked bag. Drop the collection bags in the safe, located in the closet inside the Sacristy. Be sure the bag is placed securely in the safe chute.
- 4) If someone other than the team captain assigned is handling the collection basket, please be kind in letting that person know this is a Hospitality Minister's responsibility.

SCHEDULING:

- 1) The hospitality ministry coordinator prepares the schedule. The schedule will be sent out to the ministers through email and through other convenient means. It is important that you provide an updated email to the coordinator. Nine ministers are needed at a celebration. Eight ministers and one team captain. If for some reason you need a sub for the weekend Masses, first find someone who serves at that Mass to take your place. If you cannot find someone to replace you, let the Hospitality Ministry leader or coordinator know so they can help you find a substitute. At the weekend Masses, **it is ideal to serve in one**

ministry only. For example, you may not serve as a hospitality minister and a lector at the same Mass.

- 2) If **10 minutes** prior to Mass there are not enough hospitality ministers, then the Team Captain will be responsible for recruiting **trained ministers** from the assembly to help.
- 3) The coordinator is also responsible for scheduling ministers to serve on Holydays of Obligation and other special liturgies.
- 4) Please keep in mind that it is particularly at Christmas and Easter that there is a need for more ministers to serve at each Mass. Please respond to your coordinators requests for volunteers as early as possible.
- 5) If you are not planning to serve as minister for a Sunday Mass or a Holy Day Mass that you attend, and you notice a shortage of Hospitality Ministers or the presider needs help in any way, please come forward on your own or when asked to help.

GENERAL SAFETY INFORMATION

- 1) **Be familiar with the locations of fire extinguishers, first aid kit, wheelchair and emergency contact information sheet. Fire extinguishers are located in the sacristy closet and in the work sacristy by the choir. There is a First Aid kit located in the Sacristy on the wall near the bathroom. The wheelchair is in the usher's closet in the priest sacristy.**
- 2) In case of fire, the Presider, Music Minister or Hospitality Minister may announce that people should leave the church quickly but in an orderly fashion. Hospitality Ministers should assist in maintaining order during emergencies. Be attentive to others within the church that may need assistance, and should help wherever possible in directing people to the exits. Again, be especially attentive to those who are elderly and /or disabled. **Any Minister may call 911 for assistance.**

- 3) In case of medical emergency, the Hospitality Minister may inform the presiding priest or sacristan and request medical assistance from any qualified parishioner in church.
- 4) **There is a landline telephone located in the closet of the sacristy.**
- 5) If the electricity goes off during a Mass, the ministers will find flashlights in the Usher drawer in the Sacristy, as well as in the drawers in the Work Sacristy. These may be used to assist the priest or servers to obtain candles or to provide assistance in escorting people from the pews. Follow the directions of the priest and assist wherever possible.
- 6) If the power goes off, and the weather is conducive to doing so, ministers should open the church doors to allow light and air inside. If there is an extreme difference in temperature inside and out, please keep the doors closed.
- 7) If there is a serious disturbance within the Church, any Minister may contact the presider concerning the problem. If someone becomes violent, do not attempt to subdue the individual. Seek assistance by calling the police at 911 as soon as possible.