

Updated 4/17/18

Abbreviated

## **St. Timothy's Parish**

### **Usher Procedures**

St. Timothy's Parish is grateful for the sharing of your time and talent with our parish family. The Usher's Ministry helps welcome and ensure the comfort and safety of our parishioners at Holy Mass. It is a blessing to have your help as you follow these procedures to help accomplish this important goal at St. Timothy's.

At St. Timothy's Church, there is an Usher Coordinator, appointed by the Pastor; one Lead Usher for each of the six weekend Masses, designated by the Usher Coordinator; and a cadre of Ushers. Some Ushers are regularly at specific weekly Masses, others serve as substitutes where and when needed, as their schedules permit. The Usher Coordinator maintains the roster of Ushers, accepts and notifies the Pastor of new volunteers to the Ushering Ministry, oversees and coordinates overall Usher operations, and represents the St. Timothy's Ushering Ministry. Lead Ushers oversee the execution of Usher responsibilities and functions throughout each of their Masses.

### **Prior to Mass**

Ushers should arrive at the Church 15 – 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass.

Actions the Lead Usher and Ushering team should take before Mass begins:

1. Ensure the lights are on (the controls for the Church lights are next to the light switch just inside of the Flower room, and a list of settings for various Mass days and times is on the wall above the switches).
2. Ensure that a sufficient number of Ushers are on hand for the Mass. Depending on circumstances for the particular Mass (for example the size of congregation present and the number of collections to be taken up), the number of needed Ushers could vary. An absolute minimum of 3 Ushers would

always be needed (with only 3 Ushers, 2 of the 3 would need to cover 2 of the 5 seating sections each—see the Church diagram on page 16. The perimeter (back wall), the crying room, and the Vestibule also need to be covered. Most Masses would need more than 3 Ushers. When the number of Ushers present is less than needed, the Lead Usher should seek additional help from among the parishioners. Individuals asked to assist should be known and trustworthy. Good candidates to assist are members of Church staff, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (Extraordinary Ministers), members of the Knights of Columbus, or parishioners with previous Ushering experience.

3. The Lead Usher will assign responsibility for each area of the Church (the 5 seating sections, the perimeter, the crying room and the Vestibule) to the Ushers present for that Mass. Regular Ushers for that Mass team will typically work the same section(s) each week, although rotation of or expanded duties may be needed based on absences. Substitute Ushers will be assigned to sections where needed for that Mass.
4. As time permits, Ushers should walk through the pews in their assigned section(s), placing books in pew racks and picking up loose bulletins and any other items (trash, unusable contribution envelopes—always check to make sure nothing is inside, etc.) left behind from earlier Masses. This can be done prior to Mass (if so, it is best to complete this before parishioners begin to arrive) or it can be done after Mass. *Personal items of possible higher dollar value found before or after Mass; such as wallets, purses, cell phones, jewelry, etc.; should be taken to the Parish Office (staffed on weekends from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm). If such items are found at a time the Office is not staffed, the items should be given to the Celebrant or other Priest for safekeeping. Items such as eyeglasses, gloves, hats, umbrellas, personal missals or prayer books, etc. can be placed on the table in the rear of the Vestibule. Note: during the renovation/construction of the Administrative Building the office will not be open on weekends. So items of higher dollar value should be given to the Celebrant or other priest, or a Deacon, for safekeeping.*
5. Ushers should check votive candle racks for needed replacement candles and/or butane lighters. Replacement candles (wicks need to be straightened so they are upright) and extra lighters are located on the shelves in the Flower

Room. (Note: during Mass, especially during more crowded Masses, Ushers should make certain that parishioners do not stand too close to the votive candle racks—there is a danger that lit candles can cause loose clothing to catch fire).

6. Ushers should check, and refill as needed, the Holy water containers at entrances. Holy water for refills is in a metal container located in the Vestibule.
7. All bulletins printed for the week are put out by Church staff in advance of weekend Masses on tables in the Vestibule and on the stands near other exit doors. Ushers should check that there is a sufficient supply of bulletins at each location. If stacks on certain tables begin to run low during the course of weekend Masses, they should be replenished from other stacks, or from boxes of bulletins in the Vestibule.
8. Lead Usher – Verify the number of collections to be taken up at that Mass. The schedule of second collections is posted on the board in the flower room. Additional second collections are sometimes scheduled on short notice and may not be identified on the list on the bulletin board. Normally, Ushers will be notified of such prior to the weekend. Also, second collections are typically announced by the Cantor prior to the beginning of Mass. The Lead Usher should confirm with other Ushers of the number of collections for that Mass. Tamper proof, pre-numbered, collection bags are in the top drawer of the cabinet base in the Flower room. There are two stacks of bags; one marked 'Regular Collection', the other 'Second Collection'. The Lead Usher or designated other Usher should remove the appropriate number of tamper proof collection bags (generally either one or two Regular Collection bags and one Second Collection bag, if applicable, for that Mass) from the drawer and fill in and sign the sign out sheet. **PLEASE WRITE THE MASS TIME ON EACH BAG.** If a bag is damaged or otherwise not usable, place it inside one of the collection bags being used for that Mass that will go into the safe (see collection process), and annotate the sign out sheet. If one or more of the bags initially removed from the drawer and recorded on the sign out sheet are subsequently not needed, they can be placed back in the appropriate stack in the drawer. The Lead Usher, or designated other Usher, should draw a single line through the bag number on

the sign out sheet for any bag not used, and initial off. All bags must be accounted for.

9. Lead or designated Usher - Make sure there are sufficient collection baskets and at the appropriate location. Preset locations can vary by preference of the Ushering team for that Mass; for example, some Mass teams place all baskets in one central location to be picked up by Ushers just prior to the collection; other teams pre-position baskets before Mass near the area of the Church to be covered.
  
10. Lead or designated Usher - Select family to bring gifts to the altar at the offertory (see note on page 4). Occasionally, Ushers may be approached by an individual or family who ask to do this, and those requests should normally be honored. Gift bearers should be appropriately attired ('appropriate' attire generally would exclude jeans; overly casual shorts; T-shirts, especially those containing any questionable wording or visuals; as well as any suggestive garb). Young children may be among those presenting gifts if they are among a family or group that includes one or more individuals of sufficient age and maturity to handle the responsibility. Gift bearers should be asked to come back to the table containing the Communion vessels toward the end of or immediately following the Creed to provide time for them to be handed the Communion vessels, put in proper position, and provided instructions as needed. It is suggested that Ushers attempt to use a number of different gift bearers over time, rotating from week to week.
  
11. **All Ushers - Greeting and helping seat incoming parishioners (Father Weymes asks that we be more pro-active on this).** Assist those in wheel chairs or needing help to get to their appropriate seating locations (several areas within the Church accommodate wheel chairs well--see "A" as an example on diagram, page 16). There is also a full pew marked for the handicapped in section 4 next to the electronics control box. Also, note any requests for assistance or other special needs of individuals during Communion (see Communion procedures). Ushers should not seat parishioners during the readings (first reading, second reading, and the Gospel) except for assisting extremely elderly or handicapped individuals). Late arriving parishioners should not be prevented from finding a seat on their own if they wish. Note: on very

busy days, including Christmas, January 1, and Easter, Ushers should make a special effort to promptly seat incoming Parishioners to the extent seats remain available. Fire Department regulations prohibit individuals from standing in aisles or in exit ways. Ushers need to keep those areas clear.

Lead or designated Usher - Be available to the Celebrant at the back of the Church prior to the beginning of Mass in case there are any questions or issues that should be discussed. This is also a good time to confirm with the Celebrant if there are two collections.

### **During Mass**

First, be an active participant at Mass; singing, participating in prayers, following the readings and sermon, exchanging the sign of peace, etc. At the same time, be diligent in performing your Ushering responsibilities. Maintain awareness of the congregation, focusing particularly on your assigned section(s). Be alert to any parishioner that may be in distress or in need of help. If appropriate, and to minimize distraction to others during Mass, assist the parishioner out of the Church (into the Vestibule) and, if necessary, summon emergency medical care. If the parishioner needs assistance while still in the pew, one Usher should remain with the parishioner while another Usher summons appropriate help. A first aid kit is located in the Flower room, hanging on the wall next to the cabinet containing the collection bags. A folding cot is also stored in the closet in the Flower Room which Ushers can use as needed for ill parishioners. One wheel chair is located in the Flower Room and another in the hallway behind the sacristy.

### **Collection Guidelines and Procedures**

*Faithful stewardship requires that we establish appropriate controls to safeguard the offertory collection at each Mass. Therefore, the following procedures must be adhered to at all times.*

**Note: Diocesan policy requires that at least 2 unrelated adult persons be present whenever offertory funds are being handled.**

### **Gift bearers**

When gift bearers arrive at the table containing the Communion vessels at the back of the Church, Ushers should prompt them on the gift bearing procedures—first positioning themselves, vessels in hand, at the top of the aisle between sections 3 and 4, waiting for the Priest to come to the front of the Altar (gift bearers should be advised that this may not happen for several minutes), then reverently proceeding down the aisle carrying the vessels and presenting them to the Celebrant, bowing reverently (not genuflecting), and then returning to their seats. (The Usher in the aisle between pew sections 3 and 4 should be prepared, if necessary, to prompt the gift bearers to proceed down the aisle once the Priest moves to the front of the Altar). Normally, two sacred vessels for the gift bearers will have been brought to the table at the back of the Church prior to Mass. If additional vessels are desired for the gift bearers, an Usher may pick up them up from the table near the door to the Sacristy and bring them to the back.

### **Collecting the Offertory**

The first collection should start immediately following the Prayers of the Faithful. Following Communion, second collections should start immediately after all Ciboria have been returned to the Tabernacle and the Tabernacle has been closed, even if the Priest is still purifying the Chalice or other Sacred Vessels. *Note: Pastor Meng is contemplating a change to the timing of the second collection; possibly making it immediately following the first collection.*

1. In taking up the collection, Ushers will start the baskets in the front pews and work toward the rear pews, maintaining visibility of all baskets throughout the collection process to ensure that they are not tampered with. Baskets may be alternated by row or groups of rows.
2. The Usher Coordinator and Lead Usher for each Mass must be at least 18 years old. Youth (individuals under 18 years old) assisting Ushers during Mass must (1) be pre-approved by the Lead Usher for that Mass, and (2)

under the direct supervision of an adult Usher at all times. If a youth is assisting in the collection process, they should be assigned to a section/aisle alongside and under the direct supervision of an adult Usher in that same aisle. No one under the age of 14 should be involved with the collection process.

### **Other important considerations during the collection process**

1. As much as possible, Ushers should maintain silence and a spirit of prayer during the collection process. Normally, the bagging process will be completed prior to the Consecration. If not, however, immediately following the Holy, Holy, Holy and prior to the start of the Eucharistic Prayer, Ushers should cease the collection and bagging process until the Prayer has been completed. Ushers should not be moving through the Church once the Priest begins to pray the words of Institution.
2. Consistent with Diocesan policy, it is mandatory that no adult or minor be left alone with collection basket(s) or filled bag(s) containing collection proceeds at anytime.
3. No minor can be involved in transfer of collections from baskets into the tamper proof collection bags or in placing the bags in the safe.
4. If an Usher has been forced to work alone (this is not desirable, but can happen, especially at Holy Day Masses), the Usher should seek help from known, trustworthy parishioner(s) in taking up the collection, and must seek a known, trustworthy parishioner to witness the bagging of collections and the placing of the bag(s) in the safe. Good candidates to seek help from include members of Church staff, Extraordinary Ministers, members of the Knights of Columbus or parishioners with previous Ushering experience. The witness's name and contact number, if other than an Usher from that Mass team, should be recorded on the bag and/or the sign-out sheet.
5. All pre-numbered bags will be tracked by the Business Manager. If a bag becomes damaged or not useable, the damaged bag should be placed inside the replacement bag along with the collection money and then dropped into

the safe. Both the damaged bag and the replacement should be listed on the sign-out sheet. If a usable bag is signed out, but subsequently not needed during that Mass, it should be returned to the appropriate stack in the drawer and the sign-out sheet should be annotated to indicate the bag was not used and returned to the stack. The annotation should be initialed off by the Lead or designated Usher. All bags must be accounted for.

6. If there is any evidence that any bag has been tampered with, a report should be made immediately to the Pastor or another Priest if the Pastor is not available.

## **Communion**

**(See note later in this section regarding individuals serving in multiple volunteer roles—Lector/Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharistic/Ushers—during Mass)**

For congregation members that may have physical difficulty in getting to the altar, Ushers may be asked to arrange for Communion to be brought to them in the pew by a Priest or Deacon. If this is known prior to Mass, Ushers may be able to make arrangements with a Priest or Deacon in advance. Otherwise, after distribution of Communion to other congregation members has been completed, but before the Ciborium is returned to the altar, the Usher should alert a Priest or Deacon of the need and direct them to the location of the Parishioner in need.

After the Priest takes Communion and the Extraordinary Ministers have approached the Altar, Ushers should proceed toward the front pew and make a profound bow (bending at the waist) toward the Altar. Ushers may receive Communion when they prefer; some do so when Communion first starts, others prefer to follow the last parishioner from their section.

Ushers should remain in a position near the Priests and Extraordinary Ministers while Communion is being distributed. Ushers may kneel in a front pew if room is available, or they may stand. Observe that congregation members consume the entire Host

immediately (before returning to their seats). One option that is being used and is working well at several Masses is to have one Usher positioned at the door to the Sacristy near the organ to monitor Communion recipients from pew sections 1 and 2, another Usher positioned near the first row between pew sections 3 and 4 to monitor Communion recipients from pew sections 3 and 4, and a third Usher near the other door to the Sacristy to monitor Communion recipients from pew section 5. If an Usher observes someone that has not fully consumed the entire Host (in the past, some Communion recipients have been observed not consuming the entire Host or consuming only a portion of the Host and keeping the remainder), the Usher should approach that individual and first ask if they are Catholic. If they respond yes, the Usher should quietly but firmly state "You need to consume the entire Host before leaving the altar area." If they respond that they are not Catholic, the Usher should explain that only Catholics may receive Communion and request the person to immediately return the Host to the Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Minister. If a person becomes belligerent, the Usher should walk away, but report the incident to the Lead Usher immediately and to the Celebrant immediately after Mass.

If an Usher observes a whole or partial Host on the floor, in a pew, or anywhere else inside or outside of the Church, the Usher should immediately notify an Extraordinary Minister or the Celebrant and remain with the Host until it has been collected.

Ushers should be mindful of line 'flow' during Communion. For those aisles which include two lines, each being fed by a different pew section (the aisles between sections 2 and 3 and between sections 4 and 5), the lines can become out of balance; one line may even run out while the other line still has several pews to go. If an Usher sees this happening or about to happen, the Usher should discreetly move from his/her position and guide remaining parishioners in a way that keeps people in both lines until all have received Holy Communion.

As indicated on page 6, second collections should start immediately after all Ciboria have been returned to the Tabernacle and the Tabernacle has been closed, even if the Priest is still purifying the Chalice or other Sacred Vessels.

## Serving in multiple roles at Mass

Individuals who serve as St. Timothy's Ushers often also serve in other volunteer positions, including as Extraordinary Ministers and/or Lectors.

Ushers serving as EMs. There is no restriction on serving both as an Usher and an Extraordinary Minister (EM) at the same Mass. At Mass, whether serving as an Usher that day or not, individuals trained as Ushers who have also been trained as EMs, can supplement the EMs whenever there are collectively fewer than 8 persons (clergy plus EMs) to distribute the Holy Eucharist (the number needed can be more than 8 on certain Holy Days). Obviously, if an Usher also serves as an EM out of need, it will impact his/her ability to perform other Ushering functions during Communion, and that is OK. If an Usher serving as an EM is also responsible for taking Communion to the sick, they are to leave the Church promptly after receiving the Pix containing the Holy Eucharist. Accordingly, any Ushering duties following that point in time, including a second collection if applicable, will need to be covered by other Ushers serving at that Mass.

Lectors serving as EMs. Lectors should not normally also serve as EMs at the same Mass. However, when there is an extreme shortage of individuals to distribute the Holy Eucharist (6 or less), it is permissible for the Lector to also serve as an EM at that Mass (serving as both Lector and EM is only discouraged, not prohibited).

## After Mass

Ushers should cover as many of the exits as possible and distribute bulletins to exiting members of the congregation, beginning after the final blessing.

## Other Key Points

**If a fire or other emergency creates a need for the Church to be evacuated, one**

**Usher should be responsible for immediately calling 911 for assistance. A phone is mounted on the wall to the right of the old safe location behind the door to the Sacristy to the left of the Altar. Routine matters (broken kneelers, shortage of supplies, etc.) that can be addressed later should be brought to the attention of the Usher Coordinator following Mass. All other Ushers should (1) make certain all exit doors are open, and (2) assist congregation members out of and to a safe distance from the Church. [An emergency shelter plan is currently being drafted for the School and will be expanded to also cover the Church.]**

**Ushers need to use their judgment on needed actions in other potential emergency situations—medical, mechanical/electrical/lighting issues, etc.—always erring on the side of safety of everyone in the Church. For any facility situation that needs immediate attention (i.e. should not wait until Monday morning) Lorenzo Cruz is on duty from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays and can be called or texted at his cell phone 703-489-0996. For emergencies, if Lorenzo cannot be reached, Craig Webb, Facilities Manager for St. Timothy's, is at 703-479-0722.**

If possible, Ushers should notify others on their Ushering team when they will not be attending their regular Mass. If their absence cannot be filled by others within that team or by regularly used substitutes for that Mass, the Lead Usher should notify the Usher Coordinator of the need for a replacement. If the Lead Usher will be absent, a substitute Lead Usher should be designated from within that Mass team.

Ushers for Holy Day Masses - The Usher Coordinator will communicate in advance with all Ushers to ensure coverage of Masses on Holy Days.

Attire – For men, coats and ties are strongly encouraged. Badges displaying names (which have been provided to all Ushers) should be worn at all times.

Pets and/or other animals - It is appropriate for 'Guide dogs' to be with their owners in Church. No other pets or animals are allowed inside the building, including the vestibule.

Within the Church, there are:

Three fire extinguishers; one in the Flower Room on the wall adjacent to the cabinet containing the collection bags, a second in the hallway behind the sanctuary on the wall near the incense candle, and a third in the same hallway on the wall across from the staircase.

A first aid kit; located on the rear wall of the Flower Room.

An automated external defibrillator (AED); located in the Vestibule. CPR/AED training has been provided to some Ushers and additional classes will be offered in the future. It is suggested that only trained users should operate the AED due to potential liability issues. When the defibrillator box is opened, an audible signal is activated, the signal will stop when the box is closed, or it can be silenced with the key that has been attached to the bulletin board in the Flower Room.

Cups (to provide water to any congregant in need during Mass), are located on the shelves just inside of the Flower room; water can be obtained from the sink in the Flower room or the water fountain near the men's restroom.

A kit containing materials to clean up after a Parishioner becomes sick is located in the closet in the Flower room in the green tub above the safe.

In the case of an overflowing toilet or sink in the men's or ladies bathrooms, a plunger, wet mop, and rolling mop bucket are available in the Janitor's closet, just outside of the Men's room. If the overflow is in the ladies room, and there are no female Ushers available, Ushers should enlist assistance of a female parishioner to first verify that there is no one in the bathroom. An Usher should then be stationed outside each of the entrances to the ladies room during the clean-up to advise parishioners the room is temporarily unavailable.

If the overflow cannot be stopped, or the situation is otherwise considered to be an 'emergency', an Usher should immediately notify the office, if it is staffed. If the office is not staffed, contact Facilities Manager Craig Webb at 703-479-0722, or notify a Priest. If a plumbing or other facility issue is not considered to be an emergency, the Parish office should be advised on the next business day so that appropriate repairs can be made.

Parish policy provides that people are not allowed to solicit personal donations on Parish property (i.e. on the Church side of the sidewalk). Anyone seen asking for donations should be advised of this, asked to leave the property, and be referred to the St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) helpline ([1-800-873-0613](tel:1-800-873-0613)). Copies of the SVDP business card are available in the Flower Room (blue cards attached to the bulletin board) and Ushers can simply give this card to anyone they find soliciting on Church property. Any issues related to outsiders soliciting on Church property, including anyone not cooperating with Church policy after being advised, should be reported to the Usher Coordinator or to the Business Manager.

Be familiar with other key locations within the Church and around the parish such as

- Bathrooms
- Janitor's closet
- Sacristy
- Crying Room
- Parish Office
- Chapel
- McGivney Room
- School

Be aware of any Church-sponsored after-Mass activities for that day—donuts and coffee, breakfast, etc.—and their locations; and encourage attendance.

Parish registration forms are available in the Vestibule. Completed forms can be turned in at the Office, or they may be placed in the collection baskets during Mass.

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## An Usher's Prayer

Lord,

In your love you gather your people this day,  
help me to serve them in a Christ-like manner,  
even as your son Jesus served those who gathered about him.

Make me prayerful, patient, helpful and understanding,  
and may I radiate the joy that faith brings as I serve their needs.

Give me your strength to support my fellow ministers.

May all who assemble to celebrate  
our common faith in the risen savior  
be glad of heart for being here  
and for having encountered your son in one another,  
in our priest, at the tables of the book and the bread,  
and through the ministry of ushers like me.

I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

*-Gregory F. Smith, O. Carm*

*Notre Dame Church*

*Mt. Carmel, New Jersey*

