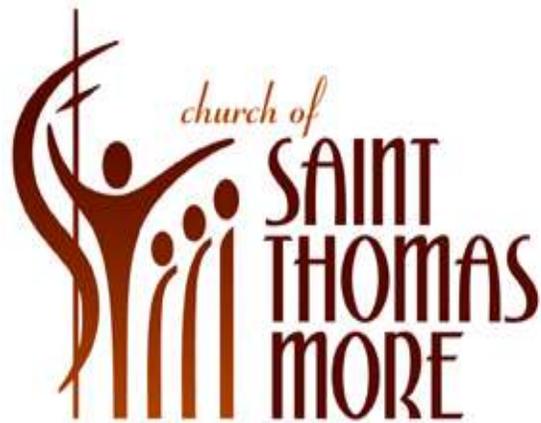


## The Usher

Webster defines “Usher” as: 1) noun – a person who escorts people to seats or acting as an official door keeper; 2) verb – to lead to introduce. These simple definitions do not describe the vast array of duties these dedicated people of our parish community perform as members of this ministry.

Sure, we help people find seats, open and close doors and do those things that everyone associates with church ushers. Hand out and collect song sheets and “pass the plate” – these are the obvious duties. In true service to the faithful attending mass, there are extremely important things that we do that may go unnoticed: like welcoming all to this place of worship with a sincere, friendly smile; we always “check in” with the priest and deacons for any last minute things or special events that may require our attention before mass begins.



We assist those going forward to receive communion, so that it is done in an orderly fashion and to ensure that the Body and Blood of the Christ are received respectfully; we assist the Eucharistic Ministers in identifying those that are unable to go to the altar to receive and must do so in their pew; we are constantly alert for those that fall ill (it happens quite frequently) and assist them with first aid – many of our ushers are certified in CPR and defibrillator application (and yes, we have one on-site along with several wheelchairs).

We assist with the selection of the gift presenters and give instructions; we also assist with the children’s procession as they leave for the Children’s Liturgy of the Word. We clean up the pews after each mass so that the Lord’s house is ready for the next celebration.

Every community needs rules. The community of St. Thomas More has come up with a set of rules in order to bring respect and reverence to our worship services. Without enforcement, rules are meaningless. We ushers have been given the quasi title of “The Enforcers”. We read into this some negativity, but when you think it through, there are a lot of positive points. Yes, we close and monitor the glass doors during the 3 readings out of respect for the proclamation of God’s Word and so late arrivals do not disturb the priest and those in attendance.

During Lent, we also close the glass doors during the adoration of the cross at the Kyrie – for obvious reasons. The doors are also closed during special events such as baptisms during mass, internal processions and other event where proper respect and minimal disruption are paramount. So yes, we do a level of enforcement, and do our best to do so with patience, courtesy and respect to everyone.

In summation, we have a group of 85 ushers in our community dedicate to serve our Lord, our clergy, and you, the faithful. We are always looking for others willing to minister in this way. If you are interested in joining us, talk to any usher after mass.

*Rich Dunne*  
*Usher Coordinator*