

For all those involved in The Ministry of Welcoming



1. Will I have to change anything I do?

Only the same changes to sung and spoken responses and prayers as everyone else, so make sure you know what they are.

You may well be asked to give out new materials to help people participate at Mass more effectively during the transition to a new Missal. These might include pew cards with the Order of Mass, special service sheets or booklets, new hymnbooks or supplementary booklets.

It will be good to familiarise yourself with what you are distributing so that you can respond to any questions that people may have. You may also want to know why some of these things are happening, so the general formation sessions in your parish or pastoral area will be useful for you too.

2. Are there any texts in the Mass that speak especially to my ministry?

Two in particular are relevant to your ministry:

The Creed, the profession of faith of the whole body, the Church. As a welcomer, you are greeting people as they come to join the local 'manifestation' of that body.

The greeting "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." Your ministry is part of that calling to the supper of the Lamb, as you welcome people into the church for Mass. You represent the Church, as it calls people to the Table of the Lord.

3. What other aspects of my ministry could I look at?

It's always useful for welcomers to look at such things as:

- where they stand when they are welcoming people;
- what their body language is like;
- whether people can readily identify them as welcomers (badges, etc);
- whether they are able to resist the temptation to chat to their friends as they arrive instead of greeting visitors and strangers;
- if the welcomers are also ushers, how unobtrusive or otherwise they are;
- also when and how they select people for the procession of gifts.

All this can be done with the whole group of welcomers, and may provide some amusement as well as progress!



A more delicate area to explore is the face of the welcomer.

- Do you look welcoming?
- Is your face 'open' or do you look a bit serious?
- Do you genuinely smile at people when they arrive?
- Do you make them feel that you actually want them to be there?

Sometimes a tiny thing such as raising the eyebrows a fraction of an inch can make all the difference, conveying a completely different expression and turning what can be a routine act into one where the welcomed person feels that they really matter to you today! And those encounters are the seeds of building a stronger community in the locality.

The trick is to make the person you are welcoming feel that they have your whole attention, that you are focused on them alone, even if only for a second or two, and that being in church is going to be a pleasant experience.

It is also important to be aware that some people are shy and think that they do not want your attention. They are trying to 'sneak' in unnoticed. In such cases, it is still very important to smile genuinely at them; and this may even change the way they are feeling. Yes, the ministry of the welcomer is all about sensitivity!

Useful resources

Our national Liturgy Office website:

<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/>

especially <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Ministry/Hospitality.pdf>

Material on the Ministry of Welcome will be found at

<http://www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk/resources.html>

and http://www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk/resources_by_parishes.html

Guide for Ushers and Greeters

Karie Ferrell and Paul Turner, LTP, ISBN 978-1-56854-745-9 [available from McCrimmons]

Liturgical Ministry: a practical guide to spirituality

Donna M. Cole, Resource Publications, ISBN 0-89390-372-8

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