

What Are We Doing and Why? Ushering in Hospitality

In the usher training and updating we're currently doing here at SMHC, we're starting to use the term "Ministers of Hospitality" instead of - or at least along with - the more familiar term "Usher." This is to emphasize the importance of extending hospitality and welcome to all coming to Mass, beyond just getting them through the door and into a seat. In addition to taking care of that necessary practical task, Ushers, a.k.a. Ministers of Hospitality (MoH) have the particular privilege, and responsibility, of being the first faces new visitors - and current members - see as they arrive at church. They can set a tone and foster a feeling of welcome for people coming to worship our God of infinite welcome and hospitality, thus helping them enter into prayer even before the first song is sung!

Of course, the MoH are not the only one's involved in fostering an atmosphere of hospitality and feelings of welcome at church and in the Parish. **ALL** parishioners and members of the Congregation need to work at this. Don't leave it up to just the MoH or 'official' parish staff and leadership, but like the "big stranger" I wrote of last week, all should be on the lookout for opportunities to greet and welcome those we don't know or recognize, and even those we may know well by sight but not by name. One very practical way all can help the Ushers in their work of helping people find seats at Mass is by simply moving toward the center aisle to make room for others still needing a seat. (Yes, this is easy for me to say, since I always have my own seat all to myself; but it's both a very practical and generous way to help people feel welcome and at home at Mass, and not have to struggle or fight to find room to sit.

A new way we're going to identify the MoH as those who can help is to have them wear special name badges. We would also like to have our MoH be as representative of all Parishioners as possible. So all men and women of the Parish, and young men and women of Youth Group age are invited, welcome, asked, and even implored to sign up to serve in this way. An information sheet about what MoH do is available. If you would like to serve as a MoH please let me or Barb know, and we will get you all you need to know and on the schedule. Thanks!