

TO ALL USHERS AND LAY MINISTERS OF HOLY MASS

Our correct understanding of what Holy Mass actually is and what's really going on at Mass will support our practices regarding the new doors to the church:

Holy Mass is ONE SWEEPING ACTION OF CHRIST'S LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION. Mass has a beginning and an end, and between the beginning and the end is an unbreakable movement of God FOR us, and us TO God. Mass is NOT like a show or a play with Act 1, Act 2 and Act 3. Mass is a fully spiritual reality in which the people give glory to God. This may be a foreign concept in a culture and time which is more and more shallow and earthly.

The doors are one symbol we use to indicate that the Action of Mass has begun. Open doors indicate that Holy Mass is not yet begun. Closed doors indicate that the Action of Mass has begun.

It is Not respectful of what Holy Mass is to apply socially acceptable standards of a decaying society to the beauty of Christ's sacrifice at Mass. Mass is intended to change us rather than it being our attempt to change Christ's Sacrifice into something socially agreeable. . .

While there is No dignified time to interrupt Holy Mass with coming and going, there are LESS DISRESPECTFUL moments like between rites when specific needs can be accommodated.

Of course, special needs must be addressed; pastoral care needs to be exercised when communicating/teaching people who may not understand; and, unity in our approach must be observed.

Prior to Mass

1. Center doors should be fully opened 30 minutes prior to scheduled Mass/liturgy.
2. Side doors should remain closed
3. Close all doors immediately after the priest enters the worship space. The center doors should remain closed until the end of Mass. (exception: Center doors may be opened to facilitate handicap entry/exit)
4. No one should be permitted to compromise the Entrance Rite by entering the worship space after the Processional Hymn/Song begins. Anyone in the commons after the Processional has begun must wait for a respectful time before entering the worship space (see instructions below).

During Mass

1. Late arrivals are not permitted to enter the worship space until the priest has completed the Opening Rite. This is indicated by the "Amen" at the end of the opening prayer and the congregation being seated.
2. After the priest is seated, late arrivals may enter prayerfully and quickly through the side doors. Ushers should hold the door(s) open and then close them once everyone has entered.

3. Disrespecting the proclamation of God's Word in the readings is not acceptable. No one is permitted to enter during any of the readings or the psalm. There will be a pause between the first reading and the psalm and another pause between the psalm and second reading to accommodate late-comers. Late arrivals may enter through a side door during these pauses. Ushers should hold the door(s) open and then close them once everyone has entered.
4. Absolute reverence is appropriate during the Consecration (the Last Supper part of Mass). No one (bathroom runs, very-late-comers, etc) should be permitted to enter the worship space during the Consecration. People ought to be taught how to stop and to be reverent right where they are (ENTERING INTO THE LAST SUPPER THAT IS GOING ON RIGHT BEFORE THEIR EYES). No one should be allowed to enter the worship space any time the assembly is kneeling.
5. Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) and RCIA Breaking Open the Word participants should exit through a side door. This continues to indicate by the closed center doors that Holy Mass has begun and is not done. Ushers should hold the door(s) open and close them once everyone has exited.
6. Children returning, following CLOW, should enter through a side door. Ushers should hold the door open and then close them once everyone has entered.

End of Mass

1. Ushers are to open the center doors as the cross bearer approaches (side doors remain closed).
2. Ushers should open all exit doors after the priest exits the worship area.