

# **The Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church**

## **Usher Group - Member's Manual**

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# **The Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church**

## **Usher Group - Member's Manual**

### **1. Mission Statement**

To serve the parishioners of The Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church by maintaining order, providing convenience and assisting in the needs of all people attending masses.

### **2. Duties**

**Duty to God** - We help to provide and maintain a quiet, orderly and comfortable environment during mass, so that our parishioners may worship God in a non-disturbing, convenient and worry-free atmosphere.

**Duty to Parish** - We support functions organised by the Parish Council and share the Council's work of organising such activities to the best of our capacities.

**Duty to Self** - We display good examples of Christian life and uphold all qualities that identify us as ushers.

### **3. Becoming a Member**

Subject to the age restriction set out in the Usher Rules and Regulations the usher group is open to all members of our parish community. Anyone interested in joining the group may contact a mass group leader or any committee member of the usher group. All members are required to sign up to one specific mass time and would be asked to assist in the usher duties during that mass time.

When you first sign up to be an usher, you will be issued a temporary badge during a three months' probation period. Within this time, you will learn under the guidance of the group leader, the routines of the different duties of an usher. You are also required to attend an orientation session held regularly by the spiritual co-ordinator. Upon completion of the session and the probation period, you will be issued your personal badge and become a full member. All members are required to renew their membership every year before January 1. There is no probation period for renewing membership.

## **4. Membership Fees**

Members of the Usher Group are required to pay an annual membership fee of \$2. This is to subsidize costs like badges, Annual General Meeting, annual BBQ ... etc.. It is also hoped that a small amount of membership fee can bring commitment to the members at a low cost.

Also, the group does not receive any subsidies from the Parish, and anyone is welcome to make voluntary donations to the group to cover its administrative cost. All donations should be made payable to the Parish, "The Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church", and clearly marked "For the Usher Group". Tax receipts will be issued.

## **5. Performing Duties**

### **5.1 Before Mass Begins**

You should try to be at the Church at least 10 minutes before the mass begins so that your group leader can assign duties to you. Ushers designated by the group leader for preparing the church hall should take a walk through to ensure that the following items are in order:

- There are no folding chairs in the main floor of the church hall, especially in front of the two emergency exits, except in the baby room.
- All folding chairs in the balcony are not obstructing the main passageway.
- The notice for second collection is properly posted if there is a second collection that week.
- There are enough baskets for mass collection on the shelves behind the last row of seats.
- Signs of "Reserved Seats for Elderly", "Sunday School" and "Eucharistic Ministers" are properly posted.
- The baby room is tidy and properly ventilated.
- The lights for the two statues at the rear of the church hall are turned on.
- All lights in the ceiling of the church chapel are turned on.
- All lights on the altar (on both sides and behind the seats of the priest) are turned on. Remind the altar boys to do it if they are not on. We are not supposed to go on to the altar.
- The mic on the stage is brought before the seat of the priest. Remind the altar boys to do it if they are not on. We are not supposed to go on to the altar.
- Turn on the fan if its hot or if you know that the altar boys will be using the thurible.
- Open all the doors for procession.
- There are enough church bulletins at both of the shelves just inside the church doors. If not, get some from the Information Desk.
- There are ABSOLUTELY no standing on the balcony.
- Make sure the offerings (bread and wine) are ready. If not, go ask the Altar Boys.
- The lineup for confession does not affect the parishioners.
- The handout for the mass procedures in the drawers are brought out and put on top of it so parishioners are able to use it.

Ushers should stand along side of the central doors inside the church hall. Once the procession of the mass service team begins, protect the procession from being interrupted by

parishioners crossing the aisle. Close all doors behind the procession leaving only one side door open for parishioners that come late for mass. Ushers should stand at the back of the church chapel, but they should avoid blocking the doors for late parishioners to enter.

## **5.2 During the Mass Service**

To maintain a quiet environment inside the church hall, the central doors should remain closed for the duration of the mass. Hang the sign “PLEASE USE SIDE DOOR” on the exterior handle of the central doors. While in the church hall, refrain from all unnecessary talking and help maintain a noise free environment. If there is anything urgent that you need to discuss with a fellow usher immediately, leave the church hall temporarily.

Turn off your pagers and cellular phones while you are in the church hall. If you have to leave them on because of your work, set them to the silence mode. Leave the church hall if you ever have to use your cellular phone. You should also ask any parishioner to leave the church hall if they use their cellular phone inside.

The last row of seats is reserved for the elderly or disabled. Enforce the rule and ask anyone who is inappropriately seated to give up his/her seat if required. Pay attention to the parishioners and always offer help to anyone who is not feeling well or needs assistance. Dissuade children from playing inside the church hall. Ask their parent to take them out of the hall if they do not co-operate.

### 5.3 Collecting Offerings

#### 5.3.1. On the Main Floor

Seating in the main floor of the church hall can be divided into six Blocks A to D, B1/2 and C1/2 (see Fig. 1). Generally one usher is responsible for collecting offerings for each block but the group leader may assign more or fewer ushers for collection.

When you are assigned to collect offerings, begin preparation right after the altar boys have walked up the aisle to the back of the church hall. The baskets for collection are stored on the shelves behind the last row of seats. Make sure you know the area that you

are responsible for and assemble in front of the altar boys. Stay in two rows and on the correct side for your collection.

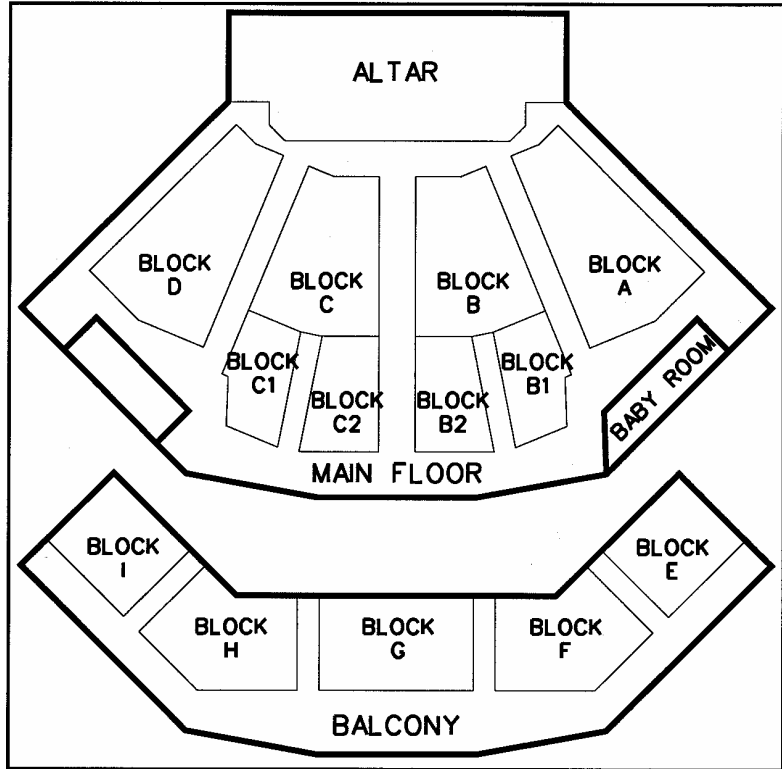


Fig. 1 - Church Hall and Balcony Floor Plan

Start your procession down the aisle right after the “Profession of Faith.” All ushers collecting on the main floor should join the procession towards the altar. When you come up to the altar, stop and bow to the priest together. Spread out sideways and begin collecting. Keep the centre aisle clear during collection for the family bringing the gifts to the altar (see Fig. 2).

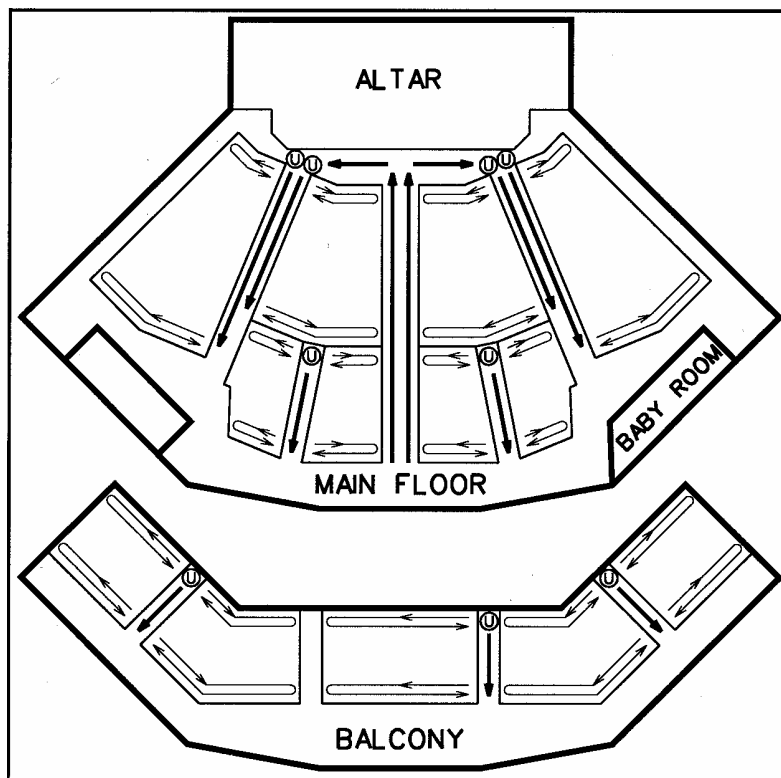


Fig. 2 - Mass Collection Route

After collection, return to the back of the church hall and place the offerings into the collection bag. There is a bag on each of the main floor and the balcony. Tie

off the bag and deposit it into the offering box at the back of the church hall. Make sure the bag is completely deposited into the box. Otherwise, anyone will be able to pull it back out. The record book needs to be signed.

### 5.3.2. At the Balcony

Seating in the balcony can be divided into five blocks E to I (see Fig. 1). Usually three ushers are assigned for the mass collection, one for blocks E and F, one for G and another for H and I. Collection will start from the lower end (towards the altar) and proceed towards the upper end. After collection, put all offerings into the collection bag. Tie it and deposit it into the offering box at the back of the balcony. Make sure the bag is completely deposited into the box. Otherwise, anyone will be able to pull it back out. Sign the record book too.

## **5.4 Bringing Gifts to the Altar**

Before mass begin, the group leader, or his/her delegate, will invite a family to bring the gifts (bread and wine) to the altar during mass. Make sure to check the “Offering Family Time Table” for parishioners volunteering to bring the gifts. If the volunteers do not approach you ten minutes before mass begins, you may proceed to invite a family on your own. Depending on the number of items to be brought to the altar, usually a family of two to three will be fine. The

“family” does not have to be a physical family with parents and children. It can be just a group of close friends attending mass together.

Preferably the family should be regular attendance of the mass and be neatly dressed. Candidates wearing shorts or ladies wearing dresses exposing their shoulders are not appropriate for bringing the gift to the altar. As long as they are actually participating in the mass, they do not have to be Christians. It is important to note that it is an honour for a family to be invited to bring the gifts to the altar. Therefore please deliver the invitation in a humble and polite manner. When the family accepts the invitation, remember where they are sitting so that you can find them again later.

During mass, after the ushers have proceeded to collect the mass offerings, invite the family to the back of the church hall. Entrust the gifts to the family and assemble them behind the altar boys. At this time explain clearly to the family what they are supposed to do.

Accompanied by you, the family will walk down the aisle after the altar boys. When they reached the altar, the altar boys will split up and continue to walk up to the altar. The family should stop and line up in front of the priest staying about one step away from the raised platform of the altar. There, they would bow to the priest together, and one by one bring their gifts forward and hand them to the priest. Then they would reassemble themselves, bow to the priest together again, turn around and walk back up the aisle. The procedure ends when the family reaches the back of the church hall. Notice that it does not matter where the family is sitting, they should always walk the full length of the aisle up to the back of the church hall before proceeding back to their own seats. Thank the family for participating when it is done.

## **5.5 Holy Communion**

The objective of guiding parishioners during Holy Communion is to reduce the queuing time and minimise conflict among parishioners. To achieve this, orders are set up for the parishioners to approach the altar and we maintain a smooth flow in the line-ups. You are reminded once more that we are not the police of the Church trying to enforce its “laws”. Therefore you should always carry out your duty in a polite and suggestive manner. Do not engage into any argument with the parishioners and do not try to stop anyone by force. Position yourself strategically to send a strong and clear message to the parishioners of what route they should take. If someone squeezes by you, let him/her go.

When you are inviting parishioners from their bench to line up, always stand at the end of the line beside the bench. Stand firm and encourage the parishioners to line up within the bench seats instead of behind you. Parishioners who have seats are given the opportunity to receive communion prior to those standing at the back of the church hall.

Have the parishioners lineup BEFORE the eucharist delivery person arrive at his/her position. The parishioners should always be the one to wait for the holy communion, and not the other way around.

### 5.5.1. On the Main Floor

Generally four ushers (one per line) are needed on the main floor. The centre aisle should always have two lines irrespective of the number of Eucharistic Ministers helping at the mass. The priest will always stay at the centre aisle. Depending on the number of Ministers helping, they will stay at the positions in the order as shown on Fig. 3 and 4. You may begin proceeding to the front seats after the priest has received the communion himself. To keep the line running, start inviting the parishioners to form the line before the Ministers are ready.

If there were children from Sunday School, they would receive the priest's blessing first. The two ushers in the centre aisle will invite parishioners from Blocks B, B2, C and C2. Parishioners will go up to the altar in the centre aisle and return through the side aisles. Ushers in the side aisles

will invite parishioners from Blocks A, B1, C1 and D. Parishioners will go up through the side aisle and return along the side walls. Start from the front seat and work your way towards the back of the church hall. Invite all parishioners in A and D to communion before inviting the parishioners from B1 and C1. Invite the parishioners that are standing at the back of the church hall to join the line after all parishioners from the bench seats have joined.

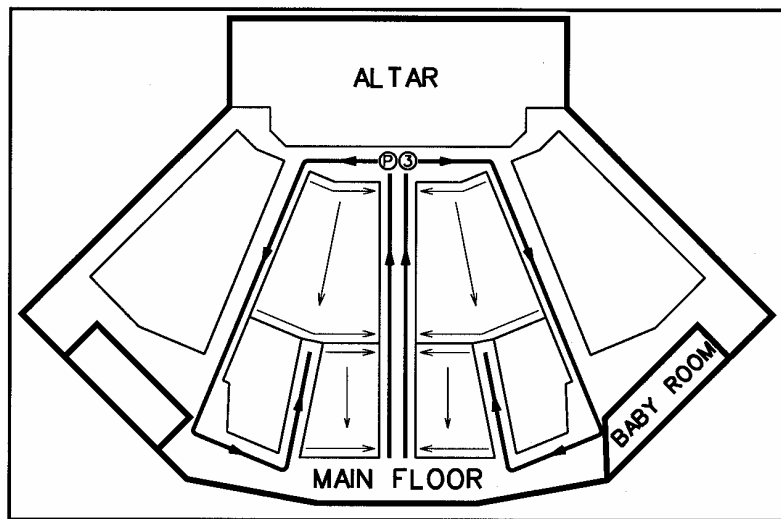


Fig. 3 - Holy Communion Route 1

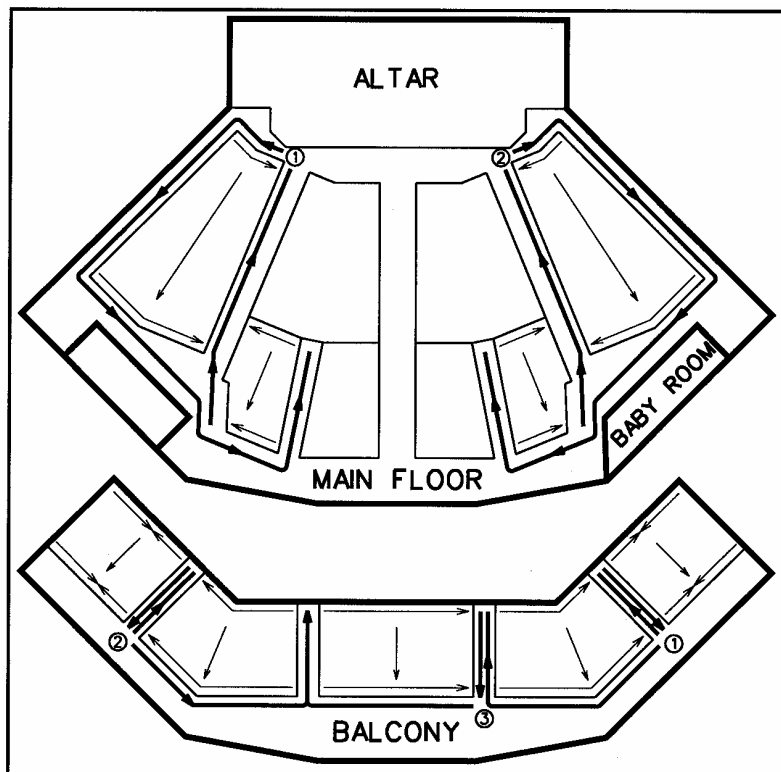


Fig. 4 - Holy Communion Route 2

### 5.5.2. At the Balcony

Similar to the main floor, start from the front seats and work your way towards the back. Start lining the parishioners up before the arrival of the Eucharistic Ministers. At the balcony, parishioners are receiving communion with their back facing the altar. Invite each Block to join the line separately. After all parishioners on the bench seats have joined the line, invite parishioners sitting on the folding chairs.

## 5.6 Second Collection

Frequently, there are second collections during mass. It could be for our Building Fund, Papal Charity, or other causes. The second collection is always scheduled after Holy Communion. Notice of second collection is posted in the weekly bulletin.

If you have helped during the first collection, take up the same position during the second collection. Line up at the back of the church hall after Holy Communion. Do not start the procession until the choir has finished their hymns and the announcer has announced that there is second collection that week. The route and procedure are exactly the same as the first collection. Try to carry some extra blank offering envelopes with you as parishioners may ask for them. After collection put the offerings into a different collection bag, tie it off and deposit it into the offering box as before.

## 5.7 At Mass Ends

After the priest says that mass is ended, open all doors to the lobby. Depending on the weather condition, keep also the main and porch doors open. Remove all signs hanging on the central doors. Maintain a clear passage for the altar boys and the mass service team from the central doors to the altar boy's room. When most of the parishioners have left the hall, close the central doors of the church hall and the porch doors. Your duty for the regular mass ends here.

## 5.8 Traffic Duties

During some masses, a few ushers will be asked to perform traffic duties. To assist you in your duty, you must have an Ontario Class 'G' driver's licence and have basic knowledge of parking rules. Report duty to your team leader at least 15 minutes before the mass begins. As you will be staying outside for an extended period of time (up to 30 minutes), please dress appropriately for the weather. For your safety, all ushers on traffic duty **must** wear an orange reflective vest.

The main objectives of the traffic ushers are to maintain a continuous flow of traffic during busy times and to maximise the parking space available in our parking lot and the near by school yard. It is **not** your duty to find parking space for people that came late to mass. When you are directing traffic in our parking lot and the school yard, maintain a polite and suggestive attitude. The traffic team is not officially registered with the police department and does not have any legal power. Work of the traffic usher must be restricted solely to within our own property line.

As the specific traffic requirements differ between masses, so did the detail operations of the traffic team. Generally you will:

- Help to enforce right-of-way for the shuttle bus during its arrival and departure.
- Maintain the fire route free of parked vehicles.
- Enforce the left and right turn exit on Featherstone at mass end.
- Issue warning to illegally parked vehicles, and
- Assist motorists in all parking difficulties.

You are also expected to help with some light snow shuffling and salting and helping the elderly and disabled getting to and out of the Church. The traffic duty ends when your position is taken up by members of the next mass team or when both the left and right turn lanes into Featherstone are cleared.

## **5.9 Other Usher Group Activities**

Apart from the regular Sunday services, Christmas and Easter masses require special efforts from the usher group to handle the over crowded parishioners. We also hold a number of annual functions and participate in Church organised activities. As member of the group you are encouraged to actively participate and show your support in all our functions. The Annual General Meeting, usually held in December, is one of the most important activities that you should make an effort to attend. Annual picnic and spiritual sharing sessions are also organised through out the year and you are welcome to attend. As we have members in every mass time, we are frequently asked to help in distributing flyers and selling fund raising tickets. Always be prepared to say yes to your group leader when being ask upon to help.

## **6. Handling Emergencies**

### **6.1 In case of Fire**

Our Church is protected by an automatic sprinkler system that is linked to the local fire hall. In case fire broke out in the Church, ushers should immediately assume responsibility and take charge of the situation.

Calm the people down by reassuring them that help is on the way and open the emergency exit closest to you. Guide people to leave immediately and ask them to assemble at the main parking lot. There are two emergency exits inside the church hall just behind the last row of seats. Two other emergency exits are located in the basement on both sides of the stage. The emergency exits in the balcony are the regular exits. When people leave from the balcony, ask them to exit the stair well directly into the parking lot instead of going through the main lobby.

Sound the fire alarm if no one has already done so. There is always a “pull station” right beside each exit. **Tell** (do not ask) someone to help you to hold the exit door open so that you can help kids and the elderly. Do not attempt to tackle the fire yourself unless you are trained to do so. Once you are out of the building, stay outside.

Next time when you are back to the Church, take a few minutes and look around. Try to remember the location of fire exits, pull stations and fire extinguishers. This information may come in handy at a time that you least expected.

## **6.2 When Someone is Injured**

The key word to all emergency scene management is to take charge of the situation. Examine the surrounding and understand why the person is hurt. If the danger still exists, warn other people from getting hurt the same way.

If the incident is minor, there is a first aid box located in the room with the photocopying machine. Ask the security guard on duty or someone to help you to take care of the casualty.

If the accident is serious, **tell** someone to call 911 and come back to report to you. Make sure that he/she knows the address of the Church that is 2755 Dennison Street before he/she makes the call. Ushers are not obligated to perform first aid. You are actually advised not to perform any first aid unless you are properly trained and fully understand the importance of consent and protection for yourself. Ask if someone around can help. Stay with the casualty until ambulance arrived.

## **7. Discipline**

Represented by the usher badge is the privilege to be able to serve our fellow parishioners at mass. Together with the privilege is the obligation to observe and be bound by the Usher Group's Rules and Regulations. Summarised below is a list of actions that would be considered as gross misconduct for an usher. Usher performing such actions would be warned verbally by the group leader initially. If the group leader's warning is ignored and the usher continues to display the same behaviour, the committee would take appropriate actions to discipline its member. The actions may include the temporary suspension or termination of membership and request for return of the usher badge.

- **Accepting gifts** or other forms of **gratuity** from parishioners for performing usher duties.
- Being **rude** or **disrespectful** to parishioners while performing duties.
- Repeated disregard of group leader's warning concerning **violations to dress code, talking** or other **inappropriate behaviour** inside the church hall, reporting **late for duty**, or any other minor non-conformance to the Usher's Rules and Regulations.
- Frequent **absence for mass** duties without advance notice to the group leader (minimum two days before mass).
- **Leaving the assigned position** while on duty without reporting to the group leader.

## **8. Certifying Volunteer Work**

If you have been with the usher group for more than **five** months, you may request the Church to issue letters to other organisations certifying the duration of volunteer work you have performed (appropriate only to members who have joined **before August 16, 2002** if regarding duration). Discuss with your group leader in advance and ask for a “Reference Requisition Form”. Complete the form and return it to your group leader. After examining your application, your group leader will put his/her own comments on the form and sign it off. If you submit the form to any other person, it will cause unnecessary delay as the form routes back to your group leader. Allow two to four weeks for the paper work to complete.

The Church would only certify the amount of time that you have **already** served. The certificate is a standard form letter printed on the Church’s letterhead. If you need anything more than just the standard letter, you must bring it to the attention of your group leader. Otherwise only the form letter will be issued. Never be afraid to discuss with your group leader about any of your needs.

## **9. Getting More Involved**

All members with spare time and would like to participate more in organising activities for the usher group are welcome to join the committee. Just make your intention known to your group leader or any committee members. You may not be able to become a committee member right away because the committee is reformed every two years. But you will be invited to attend committee meetings and given the opportunity to organise special projects for the usher group.

## **10. Resignation**

As a volunteer organisation, members can resign at any time if they feel they have difficulties continuing their duties. The resignation should be make known both to the group leader and the membership co-ordinator. The membership badge must be returned to the membership co-ordinator at the time of the resignation.