



St Mary's Church
70 Bannatyne Street
Lanark. ML11 7JS



The Ministry of Welcome – Passkeeping

Our prayer:

“Lord Jesus, you welcomed all who came into your presence. May I reflect that same spirit through this ministry of welcome. May your light shine in my heart this day.

Remove from me anything that would stand in the way of radiating your presence.

As people enter our Church to worship and praise You, may they hear your voice in my words and see your love in my actions. May my “welcome” reflect our joy at their presence and my “good bye” encourage them to return soon.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve you and ask your blessing upon all my efforts. Amen”

We are very fortunate at St. Mary's to have a group of dedicated passkeepers who genuinely care for the wellbeing of their fellow parishioners.

Would you like to join us?

What does it mean to be a Passkeeper?

Attending Mass is a positive and uplifting experience. We should all feel welcome and welcomed and part of our community here at St Mary's. This begins as soon as we come into the Church, when we are met with a friendly smile and a kind word from a passkeeper as they hand over a hymn book, newsletter and misalette. Parishioners and visitors should be able to look to passkeepers with confidence for guidance and information, trusting them to help ensure that the liturgy proceeds with due solemnity and dignity. Often when someone is troubled or afraid the passkeeper is the first person they speak to on entering the church.

Now often called the Ministry of the Welcome, what is it?

It is a Lay Liturgical Ministry:

- Lay: in the sense that is open to any man or woman who belongs to the Church by Baptism.
- Liturgical: because it is part of the public worship of the Church.
- Ministry: because it is a service to the congregation of the Church.

So, there are two qualities a passkeeper needs to have - a sense of Liturgy and a sense of Community. It becomes your way of taking part in the liturgy and serving your fellow parishioners. If you enjoy being kind to and helping others and looking after their wellbeing, it's the job for you! If you are interested in becoming a passkeeper please speak to any passkeeper at Mass.

Guidelines for Passkeepers

The Passkeepers job is to make everyone welcome and in general ensure that everything in the body of the church is as it should be.

What do we do?

BEFORE MASS

- Arrive in plenty of time to spend a few moments in prayer, before checking everything.
- Prepare the collection bags
- Check that the hymn-books are easily accessible and ready to give them to the parishioners as they come in.
- Make sure the gifts [the bread and wine) for the Offertory are on the table [and nothing else: no handbags, newspapers, gloves, baskets, etc)
- Make sure the outside doors are not open.
- Be ready for emergencies: have a glass of water ready; know where to find first aid kit, fire extinguishers etc.
- Normally the amplifier will be switched on by the Priest, but know how to do it, just in case.
- Check with the priest for any special instructions
- It is your job as Passkeepers to welcome the members of the Parish.
- Be at the door to speak to the congregation as they come in. There should be an atmosphere of welcome in the porch, and this requires the presence of more than one Pass-keeper. (But don't force your attentions on those who would rather slip in quietly.)
- Keep an eye open for strangers: make a point of speaking to them. Escort them to a seat, if this seems helpful; offer them a bulletin.
- Notice the presence of the elderly and/or handicapped and be aware of their needs. d. Notice the families with young children.
- If the Children's Liturgy is not meeting, make sure that a family or group is chosen for the Offertory Procession: normally two for the bread and wine.
- When required, give out hymn-books, bulletins, or other booklets or leaflets.
- Be aware that emergencies are possible: make a mental note of people who may be able to help: for example, doctors or nurses.

DURING MASS

The Pass-keepers are part of the Community. What they do and how they do it should re-inforce the atmosphere of worship and not distract from it. Stand, kneel, sit, pray, listen, respond, sing with the congregation. Do not treat latecomers as a nuisance. Be courteous to them. But, if you can, persuade them to wait for the right moment to go in: e.g. not during a Prayer, or a Reading, or a moment of silent prayer. A good time to direct them to their seats would be after the Opening Prayer and before the first Reading or after the Gospel and before the Sermon. Direct them, if they are willing, to the nearest possible seats.

The Offertory:

- This is one part of the Mass everybody associates with Passkeepers. The Collection must take as little time as possible. This is achieved, not by rushing, but by being well organized and employing as many Passkeepers and bags as necessary. Don't rush or embarrass anyone during the Collection.
- Make sure that the Offertory Procession is formed without delay. As soon as all is ready get the procession under way. [On occasions like Weddings, Funerals, etc., when there may be an Offertory Procession, but no collection, it may be necessary to keep them at the back till the second verse of the hymn.)
- Work with the Children's Liturgy team to ensure that they are ready, and support and encourage the children at all times.
- Instruct those taking up the gifts so that, when the priest and servers receive the bread and wine, they can take them straight to the altar and get on with the Mass.
- Those who took part in the procession genuflect together, and return to their places. At Communion the Passkeepers may occasionally be required to direct the congregation during the Communion.

At the end of Mass and Afterwards:

- Be at the doors as the congregation go out. You welcomed the congregation to the Church; send them happily on their way. Be hospitable right to the end.
- Once again keep an eye open for anyone who may need assistance. If there is anything on after Mass, e.g. coffee morning, barbeque, tickets on sale, draw the congregation's attention to it.
- Tidy up the Church - remove litter, gather abandoned bulletins, tidy the hymn-books
- These instructions are about weekend Masses. However, many of the more general points apply to any celebration you may attend. In particular, at Weekday Masses and at Devotions: make sure the People get any books or leaflets that are needed. Ask if there are any special arrangements. At Funerals there are usually quite a number of strangers who need to be directed or escorted to seats. It may be necessary to organise or help with the Offertory Procession, to open and shut doors, and, after the funeral has left the Church, to put out candles, remove chalice, cruets, trestles, etc to Sacristy. At Weddings they usually have members of the family as ushers, often teenagers. A Pass-keeper can help and to keep order if necessary.

Who does what?

Always check rota for duties such as:

- Special duties and care of our congregation including awareness of the procedures in case of a fire alarm or evacuation.
- If any alarm activates within the Church or Presbytery, a full evacuation of the building is required and Passkeepers are the Fire Marshalls.
- If the Fire Alarm activates a siren will sound with a strobe light in the Choir loft activating, all organists have been informed if the strobe light operates they must stop the music and evacuate the building.
- As the capacity of the Church is more than 600 we must have available at least two exits. Exit one is the main door to the Church and the second is via Our Lady's altar. These exits must not be used for any storage.
- Before Mass passkeepers must ensure exits are clear of any obstruction.
- Ensure that the final exit door from Our Lady Altar is unlocked (but slip bolt still in place) and available for use during an evacuation
- To allow all persons the availability of two exits a ramp is required to be placed onto the sanctuary allowing persons relying on a wheelchair who are often at the front of the Church a route to exit the church. The ramp will only be put in place as and when required by the passkeepers. Passkeepers must familiarise themselves with the ramp which is stored at the vestibule at the final exit door from Our Lady's altar.

A quick checklist for passkeepers

Five Passkeepers are to be available for each Mass

- 2 at the back of the Church
- 2 at the front of the Church
- 1 caring for the offertory gifts

Pass keepers at the front of the Church will

- ensure that the collection is started and taken up quickly, commencing as soon as the Altar server goes forward for the gifts and the congregation sits
- deal with any issue in the Church
- deal with any issue with the Children's' liturgy or the choir
- The passkeeper looking after the gifts will ensure that individuals are chosen for the offertory if the children's liturgy is not meeting, hand over the gifts and send them down
- the first row at the side of the Church is reserved for Pass keepers and the last row at the back
- One Passkeeper to remain at the back to greet latecomers

Passkeepers should also:

- Keep the back of the church tidy
- Keep doors closed as much as possible during Mass
- Toilets should be accessed from outside the Church
- Bulletins and hymn books - keep the back of the Church tidy
- Ensure the gifts are ready, are in place and are the only items in the vicinity
- Put collection bags out early so they can also be accessed by choir members
- Put up hymn numbers once received from the organist
- Light altar candles prior to Mass