## Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Church

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## **Church Etiquette**

The Parish is happy to have you join us for worship. In the spirit of welcome and mutual benefit, we offer the following. Etiquette is usually understood as a set of appropriate behaviors in a given social setting. These behaviors have been developed out of concern for the mutual good of all present when we gather as God's people for the Sunday Holy Eucharist. At the heart of this etiquette as practiced by Christians is reverence for the Lord's presence and mutual respect and charity for each other as his people gathered in the Lord's name. The following points are respectfully presented for your consideration as Church etiquette especially when coming to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist.

## **Preparation**

- --Schedule your coming to Sunday Mass (or the Saturday evening Vigil Mass)as a priority among the family's weekend activities.
- --Leave at least a good half-hour before Mass to avoid any transportation problems such as traffic or parking. Strive to arrive at least 5 minutes before Mass.
- --Look over the Scripture readings ahead of time, using the publication distributed to all parish households, *At Home With The Word*.
- --Dress appropriately and modestly. Be considerate of the sensibilities of all worshippers. Err on the side of dressing up. It used to be customary to wear our "Sunday best" for Church.

#### **Arrival**

- --Greet others as you enter Church. Consider having your family take a turn at being official greeters.
- --Rain gear, coats, etc. may be placed or hung in the corridor on the way to the restrooms.
- --Turn off any pagers, watch alarms, cell phones, etc. unless they are absolutely needed for medical or other serious emergencies.
- --Dip your hand into holy water from the baptismal font and make the sign of the cross as a reminder of your baptismal faith.
- --Genuflect to our Lord present in the Eucharist in the tabernacle or bow if you are not able to genuflect.
- --Vary where you sit from time to time to get different perspectives of our worship space. and to pray closer to a wider group of parishioners. First arrivals, please sit in the center sections and close to the altar. The far sections should only be used when needed. The closer we are to each other, the better the participation and the worship.
- --Pick up the missalette-hymnal to find the day's liturgy.
- --Settle yourself and your family by kneeling for some private prayers, also found in the missalette-hymnal. The days's Scriptures are also in the missalette.
- --Observe a reverential prayerful silence before Mass begins. Join in the music rehearsal.

# **During Mass**

--Use the missalette-hymnal especially for the music. Participate whole-heartedly as you would any other important social occasion, sporting event, etc. (over)

- --Be attentive to the Word, the Scripture readings, and homily.
- --Be generous stewards of your treasure, using your offering envelope to support your parish. Children may request offering envelopes from the Parish Office.
- --Lower and raise the kneelers carefully and quietly when needed.
- --Follow the directives of the Hospitality Ministers for receiving Holy Communion.
- --Stay for the entire Mass, including the final hymn. Please do not leave after Commuion.
- --Please replace the hymnal into its holder and tidy up your space for the people coming to the next Mass.

#### **Children at Mass**

- --Please bring young children to Mass to get them used to proper behavior at Church.
- --Prepare children by talking about what happens at Mass, what they will see and hear. Explain that there are times when it is important to be quiet and still.
- --Have children use restrooms at home before setting out.
- --Accompany young children to Church restrooms.
- --Understandably, young children act out at times. We suggest you take them into the Church narthex, where you can still see and hear the Mass without disturbing others.
- --On most Sundays, during the 9:30 a.m. Eucharist, there is a children's Liturgy of the Word, during which the children gather to listen to the Scriptures and to receive a message appropriate to their understanding. A take-home handout is usually given as well. Volunteer catechist leaders for this program are always needed.
- --Please do not bring any food or drink, except a bottle for infants.
- --Bringing prayer books or Bible story books for children are suggested. Please do not bring any crayons or other marking devices, games, or large toys.
- --Compliment your child's good behavior at the end of Mass. Correct if necessary.

#### **After Mass**

- -- Some may wish to pray privately after Mass, so please exit quietly from the Church proper. We encourage you to socialize in the narthex or the labryrinth (outdoor plaza) after Mass.
- --Please accept a bulletin from one of the hospitality ministers. Please read it and and any inserts and keep it handy for future reference.
- --The presider(s) usually will greet you as you leave.
- --Usually once a month after the 9:30 a.m. Eucharist, there is a social with some light refreshments. We encourage you to enjoy this time of Christian fellowship, which helps to build up the Body of Christ, the Church. We are always looking for families (or several families) to host this social.
- --Please check out our pamphlet rack in the vestibule and help yourself to whatever literature that appears helpful. There are offering envelopes there as well for donations to help offset the expense of this literature.
- --Please exit the parking lot carefully.
- --Do discuss the readings, homily, etc. of the Mass with your family.
- --Resolve to live the Mass during the week.

These suggestions for Church etiquette, recommended by our Parish Pastoral Council, are meant to be helpful and to foster a prayerful experience at Sunday worship. They are far from exhaustive and will be revised from time to time. Your input is welcome. October 2016