



CENTER FOR LEARNING
A DIVISION OF OCP

WEBINAR:
**CREATING A CULTURE OF
HOSPITALITY IN PARISH MINISTRIES**

AUGUST 3, 2023 AT 10AM PT

**FALL SEMESTER
2023**

WHAT IS THIS PLACE

KOMT NU MET ZANG



1. What is this place, where we are meet-ing? On - ly a house, the
2. Words from a - far, stars that are fall - ing. Sparks that are sown in
3. And we ac-cept bread at his ta - ble, Bro - ken and shared, a



1. earth its floor. Walls and a roof, shel - ter - ing peo - ple, Win-dows for
2. us like seed: Names for our God, dreams, signs and won-ders Sent from the
3. liv-ing sign. Here in this world, dy - ing and liv - ing, We are each



1. light, an o - pen door. Yet it be-comes a bod - y that lives When
2. past are all we need. We in this place re - mem-ber and speak A-
3. oth-er's bread and wine. This is the place where we can re-ceive What



1. we are gath-ered here, And know our God is near.
2. gain what we have heard: God's free re - deem-ing word.
3. we need to in - crease: Our jus - tice and God's peace.

Text: 98 98 9 66; Huub Oosterhuis, tr. by David Smith. Music: Trad. Dutch hymn, 1626.
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The Center for Learning exists to help pastoral leaders and decision-makers minister more confidently and effectively.

We provide programs, resources, thought leadership, and ministry support that promote professional formation, development, and growth.

We operate through the behaviors of collegiality, professionalism, accompaniment, and inclusion.

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Conversation agenda and outline

Today's discussion will aim to address the following items, as time allows. Use this outline to help organize your notes, ideas, and questions.

I. When we use the term "hospitality," we're really talking about...

II. All of us, and all the ministries we lead/participate in – are agents of hospitality within our parish communities because...

III. Ministries that embrace a culture of hospitality look like...

IV. I want to work toward a culture of hospitality in my ministry. The first steps I can take include...

Other ideas/thoughts/information I want to remember:

Questions for follow-up:

NOTE: The content for the pages “Defining the concept,” “The narrow door,” and “An ecclesiology of hospitality” were developed by John T. Kyler. They are included here with his kind permission.

More information about John and his ministry can be found at www.jkyler.com.

Defining the concept

Hospitality

noun

- the self-giving, intentional welcome of others;
- from the Latin “*hospes*,” meaning host and guest.

Hospitality, then, is grounded in relationship.

“All guests who arrive should be received as Christ, because he will say: ‘I was a stranger and you took me in’ (Matthew 25:35). Due honor should be shown to all, especially to those “of the household of the faith’ (Galatians 6:10) and to pilgrims. As soon as guests are announced, the superior and the community should hurry to meet them with every mark of love...Christ is to be adored in them as it is he who is in fact being received.”

- Chapter 53, *St. Benedict's Rule: An Inclusive Translation*, by Judith Suter, OSB (Liturgical Press, 2021)

“Here may the poor find mercy, the oppressed attain true freedom, and all people be clothed with the dignity of your children, until they come exultant to the Jerusalem which is above.”

- From the Prayer of Dedication, *The Order of the Dedication of a Church and Altar*

“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the [people] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

- *Gaudium et Spes*, paragraph 1

The narrow door



“He passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, ‘Lord, will only a few people be saved?’ He answered them, ‘strive to enter the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough.’” (Luke 13:22-24)

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

What prevents you from practicing authentic hospitality?

What prevents your parish community from practicing authentic hospitality?

An ecclesiology of hospitality

Healthy vulnerability

- Christ calls us to vulnerability, both as individuals and as a church community. This is the essence of Christ’s self-gift on the cross where we are invited to embrace humility and lower ourselves, to choose weakness over strength, littleness over power. Vulnerability is the basis of incarnation. Vulnerability is the foundation of agapic love.
- This is where we need to make an important distinction. We have seen far too many times, especially in our church, where vulnerable people were seriously wounded and betrayed. With this, we cannot embrace vulnerability in such a way that it allows for personal or communal hurt. In this sense, vulnerability is not about seeking or imparting hurt or pain. Instead, as Christians we are called to practice healthy vulnerability.
- We practice healthy vulnerability by being honest and transparent with ourselves, others, and God. We practice healthy vulnerability when we name the times when we cling to power and privilege, even at the expense of hurting or marginalizing someone else. We practice healthy vulnerability when we are unafraid to admit when selfish ambition prevents us from seeking the common good of all. Healthy vulnerability is not about seeking hurt or pain or woundedness. Rather, healthy vulnerability is grounded in honest awareness of ourselves and others.

Honest assessment

Physical considerations

yes	no	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would someone driving by know there is an active faith community that regularly gathers there?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the church name clearly visible, especially from the road?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the church main entrance clearly marked?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are Mass times clearly listed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are Masses scheduled based on the needs of the community (not convenience of the clergy)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the parking lot and sidewalks free of litter and debris?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the grass, trees, shrubbery, and other landscaping clean and upkept?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there enough parking spaces for your community?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there clearly labeled accessible parking spaces?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do ramps and level sidewalks communicate that your community values people of all abilities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a place for community gatherings?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are glass doors clean and free of smudges and fingerprints?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When someone enters your church, are the restrooms clearly marked?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do signs point to the location of emergency supplies, exits, fire extinguishers, defibrillator, etc.?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are audio amplification devices available for people who experience hearing loss?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there enough light so that people with varying eyesight feel safe and comfortable?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are large print editions of missalettes and hymnals available for people who need them?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are liturgy guides available in brail?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do signs and bulletin boards reflect your current activities? Are flyers up to date?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are floors, carpets, and windows clean?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are restrooms cleaned and stocked with necessary supplies?

Interpersonal considerations

yes	no	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are people acknowledged when they enter the church?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does someone help newcomers find a seat and offer any other necessary assistance?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are greeters trained in practices of welcome and hospitality?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does Mass begin at the scheduled time?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do liturgical ministers convey welcome with words, tone of voice, expressions, and behavior?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do members of the gathered assembly offer welcome with their words and actions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do regular attendees move to the center of the pew so that first-timers have easy access to seats?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do regular attendees offer words of welcome to newcomers (before, during, after liturgy)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do ushers facilitate movement throughout the liturgy (at Communion, ritual movements)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the cantor encourage full participation by signaling entrances to hymns and responses?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the accompanist play in a way that supports congregational prayer?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do musical styles and hymn texts reflect the diversity of your community?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the presider preach in a way that does not alienate or hurt people?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do spoken or bulletin announcements contain "insider" language?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do children and teenagers feel welcome in your community?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do people who live without a home feel welcome in your community?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do members of the LGBTQ+ community feel a sense of belonging?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do immigrants and refugees feel invited and welcomed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do non-Catholics or any type of seeker feel welcome?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When someone calls your parish, are they greeted by a person?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your parish voicemail sound inviting and clear?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are email and other electronic communications prompt and professional?

Basics for Ministers of Hospitality

The following is adapted from [Hospitality Basics](#) by Dr. Glenn CJ Byer, with Michael Prendergast (Pastoral Press, 2009).

Consider these Ten Commandments for Ministers of Hospitality:

1. *I am hospitality* – the assembly is my primary concern.
2. *I am hospitality* – I model the postures and participate fully, consciously, and actively in the celebration.
3. *I am hospitality* – I notice who is missing in my assembly, inquire about them, and when they are ill, I visit them.
4. *I am hospitality* – I live hospitality in my life and prayer.
5. *I am hospitality* – I appreciate beginnings and endings, entries and departures.
6. *I am hospitality* – I see Christ in all whom I meet.
7. *I am hospitality* – I know my building, its history, and its symbolism.
8. *I am hospitality* – I am a first responder when something goes wrong.
9. *I am hospitality* – I pray and celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours.
10. *I am hospitality* – I do my best, knowing that – at times – I will fall short.

Beyond Greeters and Ushers, how well do the volunteers and ministries in my parish community live these Commandments?

Which two Commandments do my parish community live most fully?

Which two Commandments do my parish community need to focus on?

What is something I can commit to starting/stopping/doing this week? What do I need to be successful?

Hospitality action plan

The following table can help facilitate a thoughtful review of current practice in your parish community that leads toward action steps. These categories and questions are most helpful when broken open as a group (i.e. members of a ministry group or area, pastoral council, parish staff, liturgy committee, etc.).

Group or area of ministry	<i>What would a strong culture of hospitality look like in this ministry?</i> Vision	<i>What does the culture of this ministry look like now, in reality?</i> Reality	<i>What steps can we take to move us from “reality” to “vision”?</i> Opportunity
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Looking for further guidance? The Center for Learning provides individualized ministry coaching as well as custom consulting and facilitation. We’d be happy to discuss your needs and how our team can help support your goals.

Contact us at www.learnwithocp.org/book-a-meeting.

Further reading

There are many books, articles, and other resources that address issues of hospitality and can assist you and your ministry. Chief among these, we recommend the following:

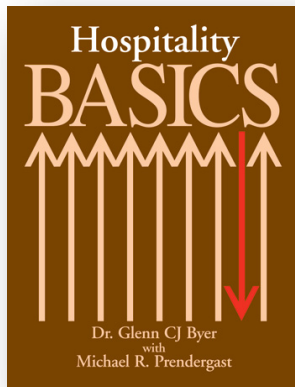


Welcome All as Christ: Reimagining Parish Hospitality

John T. Kyler | Liturgical Press, 2022

Too often we relegate parish hospitality to the few minutes immediately before or after Sunday liturgy. If we are willing to reimagine our understanding of hospitality, however, we begin to realize that welcoming others is more than bulletins and donuts (as important as those are!). *Welcome All as Christ* offers concrete suggestions for implementing a holistic approach to parish hospitality, grounded in St. Benedict's invitation to "Welcome all as Christ" and set amid the pastoral realities of today's church.

[Learn more.](#)



Hospitality Basics

Dr. Glenn CJ Byer, with Michael Prendergast | Pastoral Press, 2009

Today's ministers of hospitality (or ushers) do much more than hold doors and hand out bulletins. Written in essay format and organized by topic, the book answers the most common questions and covers the history of the ministry, the normal patterns of celebration, the minister through the liturgical year, and the relationship between ministers, presiders, and musicians. It offers practical advice on issues like parking, cell phones, cry rooms, first aid, security, and room temperature. Other sections cover accessibility for people with physical challenges, multicultural issues, and interfaith/ecumenical celebrations.

[Learn more.](#)