More often than not, you are the first minister a person will encounter as they enter the church for liturgy. Your interaction affords an opportunity to welcome them as a member of Christ’s Body and to invite them into active participation in the liturgy. The full participation by the entire Body of Christ is a foundational theme in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. This document was the first text produced by the Second Vatican Council in 1963, and has shaped our liturgical life significantly.

The Constitution called for a reform and promotion of the liturgy in which our public worship of God was recognized as the action of the entire Body of Christ—its Head and his members—by reason of our Baptism. As a result, this document called for the full, conscious, and active participation of all people in the liturgy, and instructed that this principle was to be considered before all else in the reforms.

As an usher or greeter, you are carrying out your baptismal call to participate in the liturgy, but are also drawing that call out in others, whether it is by offering a cheerful greeting, providing them with a worship aid, sharing a smile, or assisting them in finding a seat. The reverence and respect with which you employ your ministry not only creates a space for people to enter into prayer, but also helps the faithful to recognize Christ’s presence in each other and in the communion of all who are gathering in his name.

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Church offers gratitude for your contribution and engagement in the liturgy. We encourage you to reflect further on the value of your ministry, and to explore the rich text of this document on your own or with a study group. Finally, we pray that our liturgical celebrations increasingly gather the entire Body of Christ into deep and lasting communion.