

Dear Immaculate Conception Ushers,

Thank you for your hard work and for stepping up to the task throughout these past few months. I feel strongly that your role is critical in presenting our parish as a welcoming and friendly family. I also want our parish to continue to be as orderly and safe as we can make it. As such, I am sending out this Flocknote message with a few things I'd humbly ask you to pay special attention to.

1. **Holding the Doors open:** Currently, we have one usher assigned to each of our three main doors to hold them open when parishioners arrive. I love this practice and even if we weren't dealing with COVID-19, I would still want this to happen. It creates a warm and inviting environment, especially for those who might be new or have been a way for a long time. A smile, a greeting and holding a door open are no small ways to mirror the love of Christ.
2. **Dedicated "Seating Usher:"** I would also like to allocate one of our three ushers at each Mass to be the full time "Seating Usher". In order to make this happen, I am going to ask that the usher who would normally be at the East doors would instead be the full time "Seating Usher." The reason for this is that the Church has been quite full lately (Praise God!) and people are finding it harder to locate an open pew for their family. Oftentimes open pews at the front can't be spotted at the back. The "Seating Usher" would make sure to help anyone that seems to be uncertain of where they want to sit/or can sit. You don't have to personally seat each person, but certainly do your best to discern who looks "lost" or uncertain. As the Church gets full, you will have to move some people from the ends of the pews to the center and this is important since most people don't feel comfortable asking others to move.
3. **Communion time Usher:** I would like one usher to go to the front pews at Communion time to dismiss people pew by pew when it is their turn to go up to receive Holy Communion. If I'm not mistaken, this is our practice and I'd like to make it consistent.
4. **Choir Loft:** Please open up the Choir Loft and remove the barricades. I think we will need the extra space, but please only seat people there if necessary.
5. **Dismissal Usher:** Finally, I would like our ushers to dismiss people pew-by-pew starting from the back when Mass has ended. I would suggest that the seating usher fill this roll.

Again, I am grateful to each of you for the service you provide to our parish. Remember that it is Christ that you serve and Christ that you greet at the front door. This is no small thing.

Sincerely,

Fr. Justin