

May 28th, 2021

Dear Friends,

Many facets of our lives are returning to normal as many of the state mandates and executive orders are lifted. As this occurs, we look forward to a fuller participation and more regular celebration of the sacred liturgy here at St. Francis de Sales parish. We have been joyfully, reverently, and safely celebrating masses, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other sacraments for almost a year now since the initial lockdown in March of 2020. The bishops of New Jersey have decided that given the safety protocols in place, availability of vaccines, and greater understanding of the coronavirus it is time to lift the dispensation from the obligation to attend mass, thereby obligating all Catholics to attend mass in person. This obligation will come into effect June 5th, 2021 the vigil of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). What better feast day to return to Church then one focused on the reality of Jesus's true presence in the Eucharist. The updated guidelines for our parish below, are based on the lifting of certain executive orders and mandates by the Governor as well as new guidance from the Diocese for the continued safe celebration of the liturgy. If you have been unable to join us yet at Church, we invite you to come home and avail yourself of the grace of the Eucharist and the joy of celebrating mass together in community. It is truly a great blessing when we can be gathered together and take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life. May God continue to watch over our parish and keep us all happy, healthy, and holy!

- Fr. Chris

"Following these many months when pandemic liturgical protocols and restrictions have been in place for health and safety reasons, I am happy to forward you *Protocols for Liturgical Celebrations* that can be implemented as the period of crisis subsides. These new Protocols are self-explanatory and leave much of the concrete implementation of the return to a fuller liturgical life to the discretion of the pastor." - Bishop Sweeney

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The dispensation from the obligation to participate in Sunday Eucharist is lifted effective on the Vigil of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, June 5, 2021. This means that all Catholics are obligated to attend in-person mass unless you fall into the following circumstance:

This obligation does not apply to those who are ill; those who have reason to believe that they were recently exposed to the coronavirus or another serious or contagious illness; those who are confined to their home, a hospital, or nursing facility; or those with serious underlying health conditions. One should consult the local pastor if questions arise about the obligation to attend Mass (canon 87).

2. Livestreaming of the 10am mass will continue at the present time for those who are homebound.
3. Any person with a fever or other symptoms of the coronavirus should not take part in Mass in-person.

OCCUPANCY OF CHURCHES AND ACCESS TO CHURCHES

1. The state mandate of 6ft social distance between persons not from the same household has been lifted as well as the mask mandate for those fully vaccinated.
2. Masks are encouraged for those who are not fully vaccinated.
3. The center 2 sections of the church will have all pews open and be available to all those who are vaccinated. There will be no social distancing enforced and masks are not required to be worn.
4. The two side sections (“Tabernacle” & “Choir” sides) will continue to have socially distanced seating and require masks to be worn. These sections are for those who are either not vaccinated or who would prefer to continue to maintain social distancing and masks. We ask that those wishing to sit in one of the socially distanced section to please fill one side section fully first before beginning to sit in the second side section.
5. Sanitizing the pews and doors between Masses is no longer required but the church will be cleaned and sanitized regularly.
6. The back parking lot will again be open to those wishing to use it and therefore you may enter/exit the Church through the back door into the Old Social Hall

Matters Pertaining to Celebration of the Liturgy

1. At this time the Offertory collection will continue to be collected via baskets in the Church atrium. We invite all parishioners to consider giving electronically. Please see our website for more information.
2. We will return to an offertory procession with gifts of hosts and wine. Ushers will be looking for parishioners to help bring down the gifts during liturgy before mass begins.
3. For the time being, all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will continue to wear masks while distributing communion. (This will include the main celebrant and deacon while distributing communion as well.)
4. The priest, deacon, or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will continue to use hand sanitizer after receiving communion and putting on a mask and before approaching the altar to take a ciborium for the distribution of Holy Communion.
5. The faithful are encouraged to receive Holy Communion in the hand, however those wishing to receive on the tongue are asked to wait till the end of communion and receive from the priest or deacon in the center line.
6. At this time, the distribution of precious blood is still suspended.
7. Congregational singing may resume so we invite all parishioners to join us in singing the mass parts and hymns throughout the liturgy.
8. Missalettes will be returned to the pews to aid in congregational singing.

9. Holy Water to bless yourself on entering/exiting the church is available by the two touchless holy water fonts on either side of the main aisle in the back of church. (just hold your hand under them for a few seconds)
10. The holy water dispenser is available in the chapel for those looking to fill smaller holy water bottles for their homes.