

Resuming In-person Masses at the University Catholic Center

Bishop Joe Vasquez has asked all the parishes in the Austin Diocese to resume in-person Masses beginning Tuesday, May 5th. The Catholic Center will be implementing some new protocol and procedures to try and minimize possible viral exposure, and to make sure we're in compliance with guidance of the diocese, the City of Austin, and the federal government. That guidance is sometimes ambiguous; we're doing our best to adapt their advice to our particular situation and facilities. Because of the complicated logistics and shortage of volunteers, we will keep Mass at 10:30am, and not have an 8pm Mass.

Some general principles:

1. No one who is at particular risk of exposure, or who lives in a household with vulnerable people, or who is uncomfortable in public settings should feel obligated to attend. We will continue to livestream our liturgies, and we encourage you to participate in that way.
2. Everyone attending in-person will be required to wear a mask covering their nose and mouth. At present we are unable to supply masks, so bring one from home.
3. Many adaptations will have to be made to the liturgies; these are temporary, but for an indeterminate time. Thank you for your patience!
4. To the extent possible, maintain six feet distance between you and anyone you don't live with.
5. By entering the building you are consenting to the possibility of being on-camera during the live-stream.

Particular changes to be aware of:

1. Everyone over 12 years old must wear a mask.
2. Our maximum capacity under the current guidance is 25%. Once we reach capacity, no one else can be admitted. Once Mass starts, the outer doors will be locked. **DON'T BE LATE.**
3. Everyone will enter through the same door, so we can monitor the crowd size. If a crowd builds up, you must still maintain six feet distance, and form a line down the alley.
4. Upon entering the Catholic Center, everyone must sanitize their hands at the stations we've set up. Please move quickly to your seats so that we don't have a crowd building up behind you.
5. Please pick up a Worship Aid as you enter. We will not be using our usual song books.
6. The basket for food donations to the UT Outpost will be in the atrium.
7. Families, and groups living together can sit together in consecutive seats. Maintain four seats distance between you (or your family/group) and other people.
8. There will be equipment set up at the front of the Chapel for live-streaming. There will be two small cameras on tripods. Please move carefully around equipment and cables.
9. The lectors and altar server will not process at the beginning of Mass.
10. Dismissal for the Children's Liturgy of the Word is temporarily suspended.

11. We won't be passing baskets at offertory. Please consider giving online, if you aren't already <utcatholic.org/give or Venmo @utcatholic>. At the end of Mass there will be a basket on the baptismal font if you'd like to leave your contribution there. There will be no offertory procession.
12. For the distribution of communion:
 1. Communion ministers and congregation will wear masks.
 2. Maintain six feet distance at all times during the communion procession.
 3. If you prefer to stay in your seat during communion, please move into the aisle as necessary to let people pass while maintaining distancing.
 4. The congregation will not be receiving communion from the cup.
 5. The bishop has asked us to receive communion in our hands, not on our tongues.
 6. As you receive the Eucharist, step a few feet away, move your mask aside, and then consume the host. Return to your seat, mindful of the distancing.
13. At the end of the Mass, we will ask people to depart by rows, beginning at the back and working forward. Please don't congregate in the atrium, but move directly to the exits.
14. Regrettably, we won't be able to serve coffee and doughnuts. If you have kids that look forward to getting a doughnut after Mass, you might consider an alternative treat for them.
15. We will need six or so volunteers after Mass to help us disinfect the chairs. We'll have supplies, including gloves. With six people, it should only take a few minutes.

Confessions:

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available by appointment, to avoid lines and help us keep distant. Please contact Fr. Larry or Fr. Jimmy directly for an appointment. flarry@utcatholic.org or frjimmy@utatholic.org.