

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Before going into the details of what Mass at St. Mary's will look like this weekend, a few reminders.

- The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation *remains in effect until further notice*. However, the Bishop writes in the guidelines, even when unable to attend Sunday Mass “the faithful are to keep the Lord’s Day holy by some other means. For example, they should tune in to a live-streamed Mass and are also encouraged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours or read and reflect on Sacred Scripture or pray the Rosary or some other devotion.”
- “This is how all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). For your own good and out of love for your neighbor, if you are unwell or have some symptoms of the COVID-19 virus it is *critical* that you stay at home.
- Parishioners in vulnerable categories, e.g., advanced age, an underlying health condition, should consider attending instead a daily Mass, where there are fewer people present.
- All Masses (daily and Sunday) will continue to be live-streamed to the parish Facebook page and then posted on the parish website. *Holy Communion will be distributed in the parking lot for 20 minutes following the weekend Masses for those who watch at home.*
- For the common good and to ease safety concerns, the church will be professionally sanitized after each weekend Mass. This process requires that the church be unoccupied for several hours after each cleaning, making it difficult to schedule multiple Masses on Sunday. This situation will continue to be evaluated.
- The opening up of daily Mass presents slightly different challenges, and since I have been concentrating on the details of the restoration of our Sunday Masses, the current procedure for attendance at daily Mass will continue for a while longer, with the exception that 12 people can now be accommodated at the weekday 8 am Mass.

§ Pre-Arrival

- A reservation is required in order to attend Mass in the church. The sign-up link is included in this email. *If you are not on Flocknote*, you may use the [public sign-up link](#) or call the Parish Office (908 756-6524 x10). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email (this may take several minutes). Please bring confirmation of your registration to Mass with you.

§ Arrival

- Greeters will be outside the church to welcome you and answer any questions you may have. Please plan to arrive 20 minutes ahead of the start of Mass.
- *The use of face masks are expected* except for the very young (parents are in the best position to determine if their child is capable of wearing a mask).
- The one restroom off the narthex is to be used for emergencies only.
- Proceed directly through the narthex into the church; there should be no congregating in the narthex.

- Once inside the church, an usher will direct you to one of the pews reserved for congregational seating. It is very possible you may not be able to sit where you normally do.
- Hymnals and *Breaking Bread* books have been removed. As we are able to introduce communal singing, disposable worship aids will be available.
- Baskets for your weekly offering will also be available as you enter the church.

§ The Celebration of Mass

- Some elements of Mass will necessarily have to be temporarily adapted or eliminated in our current circumstances:
 - Except for within families, shaking hands at the Sign of Peace is to be replaced by a gesture that does not involve physical contact, such as a bow or nod or a simple wave.
 - Communion under the form of the Precious Blood of Christ remains temporarily suspended.
 - Out of sensitivity to those parishioners who must watch Mass from their homes, Holy Communion will be distributed after the final blessing. The procedure for receiving Communion will be explained at that time.
 - In consideration of your own health and the health of the persons distributing Holy Communion, the Bishop is requesting that all receive Communion *in the hand*. *The reception of Communion in the hand is equally as devout as receiving on the tongue.*
 - Following the reception of Holy Communion, you are asked to proceed immediately out of the church. Again, there should be no congregating in the narthex.

This weekend we will celebrate Mass in our church as it has never been celebrated before. Please pray this week that the Lord and our patroness, the Blessed Virgin Mary, increase our faith and bestow on our parish the virtues of patience and charity.

Yours in Christ,

Msgr. Benwell

Weekend Masses June 20/21

We look forward to seeing you!

Saturday - 4 PM

[Sign up](#)

Sunday - 10 AM

[Sign up](#)

We will continue to live-stream each Mass and offer Holy Communion afterward in the parking lot for those that have watched at home.

[Update](#)