

## **The opening of our churches during the COVID 19 Pandemic**

- The dispensation of the faithful from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains in place until decreed otherwise by the Bishop. No one is obliged to attend Holy Mass while this dispensation is in effect.

**There still will be a risk for anyone who attends a public Mass.** Even with best health practices and strict physical distancing, anyone who enters a public space should recognize there is a risk of contracting the coronavirus. Our Church is “risk controlled - not risk free”. Improved cleaning will occur in our churches, but no one should expect that they will be any safer from germs than in any other public spaces.

If you are at a greater risk of serious illness or living with a medical condition you are encouraged to stay safe by avoiding public gatherings, but are not prohibited from attending Mass. If you so choose, you do so at your own risk.

Please, before attending church, use the self assessment method - if you have **any** symptoms, such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat, or are in an allergy flare-up, please stay home. If possible, check your temperature at home before coming.

All who attend must observe proper hand hygiene from the point of entry, to the exiting of the church. You *must* hand sanitize when coming in.

All who attend Mass over the age of 5 must bring and wear a non-medical face mask or covering (not a shield) which is **not** to be taken off at any time while in the church . This is to be kept on until you exit

the church. Should you need to remove your mask or covering, you will need to exit the church.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING must be consistently practiced - 6 feet

Everyone will be directed to their pews in order to manage social distancing and the total number of persons allowed is 64 (30%). Only families may be seated together.

Everyone will be directed when to go for communion by the Hospitality Minister.

After Mass, please remain in your pews and the Hospitality Minister will direct traffic flow - last pews leave first

Washrooms are closed at this time, unless it's an extreme emergency whereby sanitization will take place immediately.

Elevator use is limited to one person at a time and will be sanitized after each use.

At this time, there will be no handouts, no congregational singing, no sign of peace, no bringing communion to the sick, no presentation of gifts nor is communion on the tongue allowed. It is also necessary that at this time we refrain from bringing in toys, books, crayons, etc.

Holy Communion on the tongue or the hand is a deeply personal rite in the Catholic Church. However, under extraordinary circumstances, that rite can be **temporarily** suspended.

Based on extensive consultation with medical experts specializing in pandemic management, the Catholic Bishops of Ontario have decided it is necessary to temporarily suspend Holy Communion on the tongue in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our parishes. Please keep in mind, this is a temporary step.

As much as we can, we will try to educate and inform by use of the church website and facebook pages. Let's all work together in loving sacrifice in order to do our part for the protection of others and to keep our Church opened.

Dated: June 16, 2020