FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

for resuming public Masses

at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

Are we still obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation?

No, the dispensation from Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation remains in effect for all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Washington. You still have the option to remain at home even as we offer public Masses.

Parishioners who are particularly vulnerable because of advanced age, existing heart or lung conditions, diabetes or otherwise immune-compromised are urged to remain at home.

When will weekday Masses be offered?

Beginning Monday, May 25, 2020 weekday Masses will be offered at 8:00 am in the church on Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays. In keeping with our previous schedule, there will be no weekday Masses on Tuesday and Saturday mornings.

When will weekend Masses be offered?

Beginning Saturday, May 30, 2020 the weekend Mass schedule will be per the normal schedule:

• Saturdays at 4:00 pm
• Sundays at 8:00 am & 11:00 am

Where will Masses be held?

All Masses, both weekday and weekends, will be available in the church, though seating will be limited, and on a first come, first served basis. Weekend Masses will be live streamed on Facebook and Zoom, however weekday Masses will only be available in the church and will not be live streamed.

For weekend Masses, after the church is filled, the Parish Hall will be available for overflow seating. All three weekend Masses at the church will be live-streamed on Facebook & Zoom in the Parish Hall. After the Parish Hall is filled, the parking lot will be available for additional overflow so parishioners can listen to the Mass in their cars by radio on 99.9 FM. This way, no one will be turned away from participating in our Masses.
Will seating be limited in the church?

Yes, given the new occupancy restrictions, we are only able to accommodate approximately 50–75 parishioners per Mass. The reason for the variance is that only families or people living in the same household can sit together in the same pew. You will find every two pews blocked off so we can keep six feet apart for social distancing.

For example, a family of 2 or 3 would need to have their own pew exclusively to themselves. Two single people not living in the same household could sit in the same pew, but would need to be six feet part.

What will be the procedure when I first walk into the church?

Ushers will start seating at least 30 minutes before Mass begins. Please remain in your vehicles until the doors open to enter the church and please do not congregate by the entrance before or after Masses.

When arriving at church, please keep socially distanced from other households as you enter. You will be asked to use hand sanitizer as you enter the church. Please allow extra time to be seated and be prepared that you will not choose where you will sit. Everyone will be seated by ushers as they arrive, from the front of the church to the back.

Will I be required to wear a face mask in church?

Yes, you will be required to wear face masks for the entirety of Mass. If you choose to wear protective gloves, they must be removed prior to receiving Communion on the hand.

Can we still use hymnals and missalettes for music in church?

All hymnals and missalettes have been removed as a required safety precaution. The Sunday Mass readings can be found at www.usccb.org. You may use your electronic devices to access the readings during Mass. There will be organ music at the 4:00 pm Mass with no cantor or choir. Singing will also be temporarily suspended at the other Masses to decrease the risk of the spread of the virus.

What about altar servers, lectors, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion?

Only Fr. Rob, Deacon Bill, and our summer seminarian, James Fangmeyer, will be in the sanctuary and serving during Mass. Our altar servers, lectors, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are asked to refrain from serving Mass during this first phase.

What can we expect to be omitted from the Mass?

Congregational singing, the presentation of the gifts by members of the congregation, the practice of holding hands during the Lord’s Prayer, the sign of peace, and the distribution of the Precious Blood from the chalice to the laity will be omitted until further notice.
How we will receive Holy Communion?

For the first weeks, the distribution of Holy Communion will take place after the final blessing to allow extra time to accommodate the overflow in the Parish Hall and parking lot. This applies to weekend Masses only. For weekday Masses, the distribution of Holy Communion will take place at the usual time.

We ask for your patience as you follow the instructions of the ushers who will direct you to Fr. Rob (in the church) or Deacon Bill (in the Parish Hall) for the reception Holy Communion. As you approach the sanctuary for Holy Communion, please remain six feet apart from others in the Communion line (unless you are all from the same family/home). When it is your time to receive Communion, carefully loosen your facial covering (or mask by an ear loop). Fr. Rob or Deacon Bill will then place the sacred Host in your hands after your face mask is removed or loosened enough so that you can reverently place the sacred Host in the mouth. After you consume the sacred Host, you would replace your facial covering. You will then exit the church immediately after receiving Holy Communion. After distributing Holy Communion in church, Fr. Rob will go out to the parking lot. If you are in a parked car and wish to receive Holy Communion, please put on your headlights so Father knows to come to your car.

Can I receive Holy Communion on the tongue?

Yes, you can still receive Communion on the tongue. However, the Centers for Disease Control have recommended against it as safety precaution. Those who normally receive on the tongue are respectfully asked to consider receiving in the hand as a temporary measure.

What if I don’t wish to receive Holy Communion?

Those who have health concerns and do not wish to receive sacramental Communion may make an Act of Spiritual Communion, which will be a prayer led by Fr. Rob in church prior to the distribution of Holy Communion.

How will the collection take place and when will it happen?

Collection baskets will not be passed in the church and the Parish Hall but will be available for contributions at the exits as you leave church/Parish Hall after the reception of Holy Communion. For those parked in cars, ushers will come around to your vehicle with the long handle baskets while the reception of Holy Communion is taking place in the church and Parish Hall. If you haven’t already, please consider signing up for our Online Giving by going to our parish webpage: https://www.stfrancisxavierchurch.org

When will confessions be available?

For the first weeks, confessions will be heard on weekends after each Mass (4 pm, 8 am, & 11 am) in the Parish Hall where social distancing can be maintained. Please find Fr. Rob after Mass or feel free call the rectory to make an appointment for another time.