

May 28, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

I am writing to inform you about updates to the COVID-19 restrictions we have been observing here at Our Lady of Mercy Parish. Based on revisions to the liturgical guidelines given to us by the Archdiocese of Washington and the lifting of restrictions by the State of Maryland and Montgomery County, here are the new guidelines:

Beginning on the weekend of May 29-30 we will no longer have capacity restrictions in the church. All pews will be available for seating. However, physical distancing of at least 3 feet is still required for people from separate households.

The use of masks while gathered indoors is not required for fully vaccinated individuals and is recommended for non-vaccinated individuals. We encourage all individuals to continue to wear masks when inside the church as an extra precaution for those in our community who may still be vulnerable.

Eucharistic Ministers are still required to sanitize their hands and wear a mask before distributing the Eucharist. The distribution of the Precious Blood remains suspended. We encourage everyone to receive communion on the hand as this is the safest way to receive communion at this time. If you wish to receive communion on the tongue we ask that you come up to the priest (not a Eucharistic Minister) at the end of the communion line so that we may accommodate you. The priest is required to sanitize his hands after giving communion on the tongue.

We will still have hand sanitizer available at the entrances to the church for your use and we will continue to clean and disinfect the church on a regular basis.

We will continue to have a cantor and organist at Mass and, on occasion, other choir members and musicians.

We will continue to invite people to share a Sign of Peace that does not require physical contact with people outside your household.

Holy water fonts will be filled for people to bless themselves as they enter and exit the church. The fonts will be cleaned on a regular basis.

Thank you for your cooperation and for showing charity and care for your fellow parishioners and friends as we come together to worship in a safe way during this pandemic.

Please note that our school is required to operate under stricter guidelines and will not be adopting these procedures at this time.

God bless,
Fr. Charles