

Enter and Give Thanks!

Open to me the gates of holiness: I will enter and give thanks. This is the Lord's own gate where the just may enter. Psalm 118:20.

The following guidelines are only for St. Paul Parish. They are designed to aid you in your return to regular attendance at Mass either on Sunday or weekdays.

In order to keep things simple, they are brief. When you come to Mass and have additional concerns or questions that are not covered here, please ask. In the midst of all of this there is no such thing as a bad question. This is why this document is set up with common questions and hopefully intelligent answers.

Returning to regular attendance

1. Once we are allowed to return to Mass, are we obligated to be there?

No. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass is still in effect.

2. Will I still be able to watch the live streamed Mass from the parish?

Yes. For the time being, Masses will be live streamed. This means one of the Sunday Masses and daily Masses will continue to be live-streamed.

3. I'm an older person and I want to return, is there any reason I should not come to Mass?

It depends. We encourage older parishioners, especially with preexisting conditions to exercise caution and consider doing one of the following:

- continue watching the live-streamed Mass.
- come to daily Mass.

If you are in good health, but you are nervous about even being close to others, ask an usher at Sunday Mass to find a seat for you that will allow for good social distancing. If you are healthy and are not experiencing anxiety, feel free to join the assembly in a designated seat or pew.

4. My whole family will be coming to Mass, will we be allowed to sit together?

Yes. In fact we encourage families living in the same household to sit and remain together.

5. I'm coming alone, is there going to be a seating area for individuals?

Yes. St. Paul's has the benefit of being easily configured for both groups and individuals. Ask the ushers where individual seating is located and we should be able to accommodate your needs.

6. I've heard that some parishes are having people sign-up to come to Mass. Is our parish going to do that?

We are not going to make people sign-up to come to Mass. We do ask though that you tell us your Mass preference for Sunday's. Seating will be first come first serve. We will let you know in advance, if your specific Mass time is approaching capacity. Check our web page and the Friday Constant Contact email for projected attendance information.

7. Have the Mass times changed?

Yes. We will still have Mass at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon and at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday morning. For the time being, we are going to have only one more Mass on Sunday and that will be at 12:30 p.m.

Preparation before Mass

1. Is there anything I need to know before I arrive?

Yes. As will be evident when you enter the Church, things will be a bit different. Most of us have had to deal with changes to places of business already. The same is true with coming to Church. Before you come, we ask that you do the following:

- Take your temperature(s)
- Bring face covering(s). **No one will be admitted without a covering.** The only exception to this are children under the age of two.
- If you have your own hand sanitizer, bring it and use it just before entering.

2. Before I go into the church is there anything I need to be aware of?

Yes.

- First of all, we ask you to arrive early. About 10 to 15 minutes at least will be helpful to us. Be aware that there may be some delays as people sanitize and try to keep appropriate distances from each other.
- We ask you to sanitize your hands before entering and to **do this either using your own sanitizer or that of the church in full view of the ushers.** None of us wants to feel annoyed.

3. What about inside? Will there be changes?

Yes.

- Please follow the directions of the ushers to get you to an appropriate seat. Due to state social distancing requirements we are asking that people not congregate in the narthex.
- Also, **please try to use the bathroom before you leave your home.** Restrooms will have limited access. Only one person at a time will be admitted. The exception would be a parent with a child. No child will be admitted without a parent present.
- You will notice the following in the Church:
 - No Holy Water
 - No Hymnals
 - Clearly marked available seating

- Tables with large baskets on them in the narthex for your contribution
- Tables in the front at communion stations.

The Celebration of Mass

1. What about the Mass itself? Will there be changes?

Yes. You will notice that Sunday Mass will have more the feel of a weekday Mass. We'll try to have some music, but it will be simple. Also, parts of the Mass will be different:

- There will be no processions or a collection taken during Mass.
- We will not have the Sign of Peace.
- We ask that people not hold hands during the Our Father.
- Distribution of Holy Communion will be a little different and only under the form of Bread.

2. How will the distribution of Holy Communion be different?

- First, ushers will invite rows to come forward. This is to aid in social distancing.
- When you approach:
 - **The minister will say “The Body of Christ.”**
 - **You say “Amen.”**
 - **Lower your face covering.**
 - **You will be given the Host.**
 - **You consume the Host.**
 - **You replace your covering and return to your seat.**
- For those of you with young children receiving, have them receive first. They may have trouble lowering the face covering and may need help lowering and recovering their faces.
- We ask that for hygienic reasons everyone receive in the hand. If your conscience forbids this, you may receive on the tongue but please note that because you choose to do this you may endanger the minister, the minister will immediately stop and sanitize his hands.
- For those not receiving Holy Communion, we ask that you try to remain in your seat. This includes young children. Due to issues with distancing, no blessings will be given at Communion time.

6. How will we exit after Mass?

We ask you to be patient with this process. Ushers will guide the flow of people out of the building. We ask you to distance yourselves as you leave. We will have the front and side doors open. Everyone should leave the church as quickly as possible.