

Memorandum

To: All Parishioners

From: Fr. Vince and Deacon Roger

Date: May 20, 2020

Re: Reopening the Church for Mass

Below are practices in the celebration of Mass to fulfill the requirements of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, with other directives to be determined by the diocese.

Before Mass

- 1) Bishop Brennan has dispensed the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday until Labor Day. Therefore,
 - a) Those who are symptomatic or who have been exposed to another with the virus within 14 days are not permitted to enter the church, in accordance with national, state and local health directives. All attendees are asked to check their temperature at home before coming to church.
 - b) Those who are at risk because of an underlying health issue or who are 70 or older are strongly encouraged, for their own health, to avoid the risk of attending public celebrations of the Mass.
 - c) The Mass will still be live-streamed (even on a daily basis), so that those unable to attend in person may maintain a spiritual connection.
- 2) Appropriate cleaning of high use areas within the church will be done before and after each service.
 - a) The pews utilized by the assembly will be wiped down with disinfectant.
 - b) All hymnals and missalettes have been removed from the pews and stored for the duration of the pandemic. Worship aids will be provided, but we ask that you take them with you when you leave; no other materials may be left in the pews. The faithful are encouraged to bring their own missals or hymnals or smartphones for use during the celebration of Mass.
 - c) Restroom facilities and door handles, push plates, and knobs will be sanitized after each service.

- 3) Holy water fonts will remain empty until further notice.
- 4) Hand sanitizer is available at the entry to the church.
- 5) The faithful are obliged to wear a mask upon entering the church and during the celebration of Mass, unless they are under the age of two. You are asked to continue wearing the mask except for the brief moment of receiving Holy Communion. Ushers and other volunteers are to wear masks and gloves (when gloves are not available, frequent handwashing will be necessary) throughout the celebration of Mass. Those at the altar are to wear a mask if distributing Holy Communion.
- 6) Clergy and other ministers are to maintain six-foot distancing and should not greet parishioners as they enter the church.

During Mass

- 1) **Entry and exit doors** will be adequately designated and monitored. Entry doors are to be propped or held open before Mass, and exit doors are to be propped or held open at the end of Mass to prevent people from touching the door handles, knobs or push plates.
- 2) Staff, ushers or other volunteers should assist with directing people to pews; we will leave every-other pew vacant. **Attendance may be limited** to assure compliance with social distancing requirements.
- 3) **Families are to maintain six-foot distancing** between their family and other families or individuals throughout the celebration of Mass.
 - a) Seating is to be arranged such that six feet of distance can be maintained between members of one household and members of another.
 - b) One pew is to be left vacant in between parishioners such that six feet of distance can be maintained in all directions.
 - c) Music ministers are to maintain six-foot social distancing.
- 4) **Procession of the Gifts is suspended.** Collection baskets (or any other materials) will not be passed from one family to another, nor will ushers take up the collection from the congregation. Stationary baskets will be used for donations from the assembly and will be monitored by the ushers until the donations are collected and handled according to parish protocols.
- 5) **The sign of peace is suspended.**

- 6) Priests or deacons who are in at-risk groups are permitted to refrain from distributing Holy Communion and can delegate distribution to other Communion ministers.
- 7) **Distribution of communion will happen after Mass.** Ushers or other volunteers who are masked and gloved will ensure six-foot distancing in the communion line. We ask that parishioners keep at least one pew apart from the person in front of you as you approach the sanctuary for communion to facilitate proper social distancing.
- 8) **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will not be needed at this time to prevent the spread of germs.**
- 9) **Distribution of Holy Communion from the chalice is prohibited** to the assembly and vested deacons. For those who are gluten intolerant, special arrangements are to be made with the pastor.
- 10) Maintaining a single file line is necessary for the distribution of Holy Communion for each Communion minister, and communicant to maintain social distancing and one-way traffic patterns.
- 11) Those who refrain from receiving communion still unite themselves with the sacrifice of Christ. **Non-communicants are kindly asked to remain in their places** rather than process to request a blessing—a blessing all receive at the end of Mass.
- 12) When approaching Fr. Vince or Deacon Roger, the communicant is to pull their mask below their chin in order to receive Communion. The communicant immediately replaces their mask after consuming the Host. Communion in the hand is strongly suggested.

After Mass

- 1) Family units should depart the church in an organized manner wearing masks and observing six feet of distance between other households. Ushers or clergy may need to direct this process.
- 2) Ushers are not to hand out bulletins or other materials.
- 3) Clergy and other ministers are not to greet parishioners as they exit the church.
- 4) There are to be no receptions or social gatherings (e.g., coffee and doughnuts) following Mass.
- 5) Pews and other high traffic areas of the church are to be wiped down before the next service, with the removal of trash and other items from the pews.