

Guidelines for the Return to Mass

30 May 2020

Starting on Saturday, 30 May 2020, we will begin to restart public **weekend** Masses at Sacred Heart Parish in Remington. Bishop Doherty has come up with a phased plan for restarting public Masses in our diocese. You can read the entire decree on the Diocesan website at:

<https://dol-in.org/covid-19-updates>

The purpose of the plan is to mitigate the risk of exposure to the virus. We will use cleaners to sterilize frequently touched surfaces in the church, but the church building is not a sterile facility and we cannot completely eliminate all risk.

A number of things will be different from usual at the Masses this weekend and throughout “Phase B”. Here is my summary of things that I think you should know before coming to Mass this weekend:

1. The bishop has extended the **dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass** until 15 August 2020. Therefore, no one should feel required to go to Mass this weekend. In particular, those who are experiencing any sickness, those whose health is in some way compromised, those who are fearful of the possibility of infection of COVID-19, and those over the age of 65 should consider staying home.
2. The Saturday 5pm Mass will be **designated specifically for the vulnerable** to protect them from unnecessary interaction with the non-vulnerable population, if they insist on coming to Mass despite the general dispensation.
3. There will be **no singing or music** at Mass and all hymnals and missalettes will be removed from the pews.
4. There will be **no altar servers or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**. There will be one reader at each Mass.
5. **Masks:**
 - A. All attending Mass are required to wear a face mask.
 - B. Please bring a mask with you, if you have one. If you do not have one, we will have disposable masks at the door for your use.
 - C. Scarves and bandannas are not considered sufficient and masks with inappropriate symbols/words should not be worn to Mass.
 - D. The priest and reader are not to wear masks, gloves, or other PPE during the Mass.

6. Social Distancing:

- A. Each household must be seated at least 6 feet away from any other household.
- B. There will be ushers who will ensure this at each Mass
- C. I am not planning to rope off pews, but some pews may need to be left empty in order to meet the 6 foot requirement.
- D. It may be necessary to turn people away if there is no where to seat more households with the required social distancing. If this occurs, I will take this into consideration when planing for future weeks.

7. Doors:

- A. The main doors will be left open at the beginning and end of Mass so that no one has to touch the doors.
- B. The side door will be locked, but the elevator will be unlocked and available.

8. **Cleaning** will take place between Masses, and we will follow the guidelines of the bishop and the State of Indiana and the CDC.

9. Holy Communion

- A. There will be no distribution of Holy Communion during Mass.
- B. Distribution will occur at the end of Mass.
- C. I will wear a mask, but no gloves during distribution and I will wash my hands before beginning.
- D. I will distribute from the back of the Church and I will ask you to come forward starting with those in the back. After receiving Holy Communion, you are to exit the building.
- E. If you do not wish to receive Holy Communion, you may leave at any time through the side door or wait until your row goes forward and then exit without receiving.
- F. All will need to do their best to maintain social distancing while standing in line and while exiting the building.
- G. There will be markers on the floor of the main aisle to indicate a 6 foot distance.

10. There will be no **Collection** during Mass, but there will be a basket at the end of Mass, where you can drop your offering.

11. **RCIA, First Communion, and Confirmation** are not permitted during this phase. I will be scheduling them after I know when the next phase begins. Right now, the bishop is anticipating that “Phase C” will start in mid-June.

12. Regularly scheduled **Confessions** will restart on 6 June 2020.