

# Update of Guidelines for the Return to Mass

## Start of Phase 'D'

### 2 July 2020

Starting on **Sunday, 4 July 2020, Holy Communion will be distributed during Mass at all Masses** at Sacred Heart Parish in Remington. We will restart regular **weekday Masses on 6 July 2020.**

Bishop Doherty has updated his guidelines for returning to public Masses in our diocese. You can read the entire updated 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.

Here is my summary of things that I think you should know before coming to Mass during phase 'D':

1. The bishop has granted a **dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass** until 15 August 2020. Therefore, no one should feel required to go to Mass during this phase. 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.
  - A. This dispensation ends before weekend Masses on the 15th, so there is an obligation to attend Weekend Mass starting on 15 August 2020. However, anyone who feels sick should still stay home. No one is ever obliged to attend Mass while ill or infirmed.
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.
  - A. The **Saturday 5pm Mass will continue to follow the Phase 'B' guidelines, so masks will still be required** at this Mass.
  - B. There will be no Altar Servers or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. There will be one reader at Mass.
3. At the **Sunday 8:30am Mass, face masks will be optional.**
  - A. There will be no Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. There will be one reader at Mass and we may have up to 3 volunteer altar servers. Readers and Altar Servers will not wear masks while performing their functions during Mass.
  - B. I will process in at the beginning of Mass along with any Altar Servers.

4. The **Weekday Masses will follow Phase ‘D’ guidelines** and so will be like the Sunday Mass. **Masks will be optional, but social distancing of 6 feet or more is required.**
5. **Music at all Masses:**
  - A. There will be **no congregational singing** at Mass and all hymnals and missalettes will be removed from the pews. However, we will have instrumental music at Mass.
  - B. If you would like a missalette to use during Mass, you can take one home with you and bring it back each time. However, we cannot leave them in the pews or on the shelves in the vestibule. The missalettes are only for following along with the readings and prayers of the Mass.
6. **Social Distancing at all Masses:**
  - A. Each household must be seated at least 6 feet away from any other household.
  - B. Each household will be responsible for ensuring this.
  - C. Some pews may need to be left empty in order to meet the 6 foot requirement.
  - D. There is additional seating in the choir loft and the cry room.
  - E. If we get to the point that we cannot seat everyone, we may have to go back to wearing masks so that we can sit closer than 6 feet.
7. **Cleaning** will take place between all Masses, and we will follow the guidelines of the bishop and the State of Indiana and the CDC.
  - A. I will be looking for volunteers to help with sanitizing the pews, especially after the Sunday morning Mass.
8. **Holy Communion at all Masses:**
  - A. Distribution of Holy Communion will be during Mass.
  - B. I will wear a mask, but no gloves during distribution and I will wash my hands before beginning.
  - C. There will be a table with hand sanitizer near the front of the church.
  - D. As you approach for Communion, please remove your face mask and then sanitize your hands with the hand sanitizer before receiving the Holy Eucharist.
  - E. Please try not to touch anything after sanitizing your hands and before receiving the Holy Eucharist.
  - F. All will need to do their best to maintain social distancing while standing in line. There will be markers on the floor of the main aisle to indicate a 6 foot distance.
9. There will be no **Collection** during Mass, but there will be a basket at the end of Mass, where you can drop your offering at the end of Mass.
10. There will be printed **bulletins** which you can pick up on your way out of the building at the end of Mass. The bulletins will always be available on the website, if you prefer not to pick them up at the Church.
11. **Phase ‘D’** is expected to be the ‘norm’ throughout the coming year.