

## ***Stella Maris & the COVID Pandemic***

(September 3, 2020)

For the benefit of visitors and newcomers, I write (once more) to share our practices at Stella Maris during the pandemic. Foremost, I remind you that as a public space, we cannot guarantee the safety of anyone. Those who are vulnerable or otherwise concerned are reminded that there is no obligation to attend Mass at this time. Please note the following summary, which is followed by more detailed information:

1. Our regular schedule of Masses continues with one exception. Presently, we do not celebrate a simultaneous Mass in the Parish Hall at 9:30. We are monitoring our numbers at the 9:30 and will determine if and when we should reinstitute 9:30 Mass in the Hall.
2. One-half of the church pews are roped off for the sake of distancing. Those who arrive together may sit together but should distance themselves from those who might already be seated. Those who arrive individually should distance themselves from each other or groups already seated.
3. All are highly encouraged to wear masks. Whatever personal opinions may be regarding masks, I encourage people to consider the use of masks an act of charity for the concerns of others, especially the vulnerable. For more information on this policy, please see my bulletin column of July 26, which is being re-published on the webpage.
4. Diocesan policy strongly encourages the reception of Holy Communion in the hand. When approaching for Holy Communion, please use the middle aisle with appropriate distancing and return by the side aisles to your seats. If receiving in the hand, please keep your hands level and try to avoid touching the fingers of the minister of Holy Communion. There is no Communion in the hand in the rubrics of the Traditional Latin Mass. At the Latin Mass, Holy Communion is distributed at the Communion rail. Those who are not receiving in a group (such as a family) can properly distance by receiving near the white bows on the Communion rail. To receive Holy Communion on the tongue you should: open your mouth sufficiently, extend your tongue, and *close your eyes*. Please do not watch the movement of the minister's hand or try to anticipate the movement. If done properly, we can distribute Holy Communion on the tongue without physical contact.
5. We do not re-use paper products or leave them in the pews during the pandemic. When leaving the church, please place your tri-fold worship aid in the recycling bins provided. Those who hear Mass in the Hall are asked to leave their worship aids on their seats so that those who disinfect pews and chairs after each Mass will know which areas in the Hall have been used. Parishioners of Stella Maris may take a missalette home for use at Sunday Masses. Please do not return missalettes to the boxes, but keep them and re-use them weekly.

6. During the pandemic, the Offertory collection and procession with the gifts as well as the exchange of the Sign of Peace are suspended. There is a basket in the vestibule in which offerings can be placed as you enter.

To reiterate: no one who feels vulnerable or unsafe is obliged to attend Mass. Please note the following options when the church reaches capacity or when people feel unsafe going into the church: all Sunday Masses are conveyed to the Parish Hall via closed circuit television where there is room for spacing; an external speaker outside the front doors of the church allows people to hear Mass outside; a small FM transmitter (97.1 on your dial) will carry Mass to your car if you park near the church. Those not hearing Mass inside the church are invited to come inside to receive at the time of Holy Communion. Every Sunday our 9:30 Mass is live streamed on the internet.

The Parish Office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. until Noon. If uncomfortable coming to the office, requests for Mass intentions and parish registrations can be done by telephone or surface mail. If coming to the office in person, please do not enter the actual office area.

(Rev.) Lawrence B. McInerny, Pastor

***Saint Roch, pray for us, that we may be preserved from all diseases of body and soul.***