

St. Patrick Church - Milford
NEW COVID-19 GUIDELINES
Effective June 14, 2021

SUNDAY MASS OBLIGATION

- **STATEMENT FROM THE BISHOPS OF THE BOSTON PROVINCE (BOSTON, FALL RIVER, SPRINGFIELD, MANCHESTER, AND PORTLAND) LIFTING THE DISPENSATION OF THE SUNDAY AND HOLY DAY MASS OBLIGATION, EFFECTIVE THE WEEKEND OF JUNE 19 AND 20, 2021.**
- *Aware that the opportunity to participate in Sunday Mass is increasingly available and increasingly safe for our Catholic people, we the Bishops of the Boston Province, (Boston, Fall River, Springfield, Manchester, and Portland) are lifting the dispensation of the Sunday and Holy Day Mass obligation, effective the weekend of June 19 and 20, 2021.*

This obligation does not apply to those who are ill; those who have been recently exposed to COVID or any other communicable illness; those who are confined to their homes or to hospitals or other facilities due to illness, infirmity, frailty, or age; and those who are not yet able to be vaccinated, due to age or any health consideration.

To all of those who have not been able to be with us during this last year, we look forward to welcoming you back to the celebration of the Mass.

To read the entire statement, go to parish website saintpatrickmilfordnh.org and click on Pastor's Notes

WEARING MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

- **Effective immediately** vaccinated people are no longer required to wear masks or socially distance in our parish. Seating IN THE CHURCH (including the choir loft) is restored to 100% capacity.
- The wearing or not wearing of a mask is now solely the option of the individual; some may still desire to wear a mask for personal reasons, while some may wish the practice to be abandoned entirely. No one should be shamed or admonished for taking either approach. In the making of the decision whether to wear a mask, those who have not been vaccinated must be mindful of the need to take appropriate alternative safeguards for the care of self and others, as recommended by public health authorities.
- **For those who wish to attend Mass and wear masks AND socially distance, the Parish Hall will continue to require masks and socially distance.**
- Some people who are comfortable dropping social distancing may not yet be comfortable taking off their masks. It should be communicated to people that they are free to continue to wear masks as long as they like, and that they will be respected if they choose to do so.
- Fr. Dennis and Staff will not be policing the population. Every parishioner and every family will be expected to make a sound, reasonable decision about when they are ready to take off their masks and be near other people. Fr. Dennis and Staff will not ask people whether or not they have been vaccinated.

LIVE-STEAMING MASS

- We will be continuing to stream our Masses.

SINGING AT MASS

- Congregational singing is allowed, as are choirs.

LECTOR and EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

- Current Lector and Eucharistic Ministers procedures remain in place for the time being.

ALTAR SERVERS

- Altar servers will be reinstated in the Fall and allowed to serve only when they are fully vaccinated.

OTHER MASS PROCEDURES

- **The following items shall remain suspended for the time being:**

Entrance and Recessional processions and after Mass Greeting by Celebrant
Bringing up the Gifts of Bread and Wine
The exchange of the Sign of Peace
Distribution of the Precious Blood

- Priests and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist should still disinfect their hands before distributing Holy Communion.
- The bottle of hand sanitizer will be kept close at hand in case someone receives communion on the tongue.
- Missalettes will become available again in November (1st Sunday of Advent).
- Holy Water fonts will be cleansed and filled.

DISINFESTING THE CHURCH AND PARISH HALL

- It is no longer necessary to regularly disinfect surfaces.

REGARDING PASTORAL CARE

- Communion and calls may resume normally.
- Nursing home visits Anointing of the Sick and Masses will resume in the fall although it remains necessary to be completely respectful of the protocols of the facility being visited.
- The use of confessional rooms including face to face confessions will resume.

REGARDING OTHER PARISH ACTIVITIES

- Pastors continue to have responsibility to be sure the parish space is being used safely.
- Adult programs (RCIA and Adult Faith Formation) may resume in person in the Fall.
- Thursday Gatherings after morning Mass may resume after Labor Day.
- Sunday Coffee and Donuts will resume when our schools no longer require masking and social distancing.
- Since masking and social distancing are still required in schools, we are not yet certain about what youth ministry and faith formation and scouting programs for children will need to look like in the fall. We will keep you advised.