

JACKSON COUNTY CATHOLICS (St. Dominic, St Francis Xavier, Our Lady of Snows)

GUIDELINES for the RESUMPTION of PUBLIC WORSHIP

This guideline is designed specifically for use at St. Dominic, St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady of Snows Shrine. It adheres to and adapted from a recently published guideline published by the archdiocese in consultation with a Pandemic Advisory Group consisting of physicians and infection control specialists familiar with Catholic practices.

1. **DISPENSATION from SUNDAY OBLIGATION.** Dispensation from obligation for Catholics to attend Sunday Mass will remain in effect.
 - Persons with higher vulnerability to the virus, for personal safety reasons, are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the dispensation and refrain from attending public Mass.
 - Out of charity and concern for the welfare of others, anyone with ANY KIND of acute symptoms (fever, coughing, etc.) or **possible recent exposure to an infected person** SHOULD NOT attend religious services. PLEASE TAKE THIS VERY SERIOUSLY. IF THERE IS EVEN ONE ASYMPTOMATIC COVID CARRIER THAT ATTENDS A MASS, EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THAT MASS WILL HAVE TO SELF-QUARANTINE FOR 14 DAYS, INCLUDING THE PRIEST.
 - Livestreaming of Masses via Facebook Live will continue for daily Masses and one Sunday Mass (10:30am, St Dominic). Families, individuals, or households are most welcome to simply choose this option.

2. **DENSITY LIMITATIONS and CROWD TRAFFIC.** To strictly monitor and adhere to density limits suggested by the local government and health care experts, the following restrictions should be observed:
 - Parishioners are encouraged to attend Mass at the parish in which they are registered in or which they would normally attend.
 - Social distancing of at least six feet should always be observed within the church space.
 - Until restrictions are lifted, we are constrained to have only a specific number of families or couples in attendance based on social distancing and available space. Available space is determined by the need to alternate between empty pews and designated pews. The number of empty pews in between is still being studied and considered. *[Most likely, there will be 2 empty pews for every occupied one at St. Francis while St. Dominic **might** just have one empty pew for every occupied one]*
 - Designated pews can be either a FAMILY PEW or a COUPLE PEW. FAMILY PEWS will be occupied by a household of three or more members, while COUPLE PEW will be occupied by two couples (or solo individuals) from different households sitting at each extreme end of the pew.
 - **Households who elect to attend Masses in person are asked to CHOOSE ONE WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE THEY CAN COMMIT TO** for the duration that the restrictions are in effect. Thus, once that choice is made, they are politely asked to NOT 'randomly attend' Mass at a different time.
 - If a significant number of households elect to attend Masses in person, additional Masses may be scheduled, if necessary. If the demand for a particular Mass time is high, households who signed up for it may have to be cycled in a rotation with other households (meaning, they may be asked to attend Masses every other weekend instead of every weekend).
 - Greeters will assist in directing traffic at the doors to avoid clogging, while ushers will facilitate seating. To avoid additional exposure, we will seek to **first fill up available spaces in the front** as people arrive.
 - At the end of Mass, exiting will also be controlled and staggered with the assistance of ushers.
 - Entry and exit doors will be propped open or held by the greeter to avoid attendees unnecessarily touching the door. As people leave, available bulletins will not be handed out, simply pick them up.

3. **PERSONAL BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES.** Those who attend Masses in parish churches should:
 - Observe the six-foot minimum distancing requirements described above.
 - Purify hands with sanitizer (available at the church entrances) before entering the church AND as they exit.
 - Wear a mask, covering mouth and nose, prior to entering the church until after leaving the church. Attendees are asked to personally provide for their own.
 - Avoid close contact (shaking hands, hugging, etc.) with people who are not members of one's household.
 - Avoid unnecessarily touching anything in the church.
 - Watch the tutorial videos provided by the archdiocese.

4. **LITURGICAL GUIDELINES for PUBLIC CELEBRATION of MASS.** The following practices should be employed:

(a) For the Mass in general

- Limit duration of Sunday Masses to 45 minutes to limit exposure time between persons.
- Limit the number of liturgical ministers to a minimum required to effectively celebrate the liturgy. (No lectors, altar servers, cantors, musicians). Sacristans do not help prepare for Mass but help afterwards.
- Congregational singing is suspended to limit droplet dispersion until further notice. Music should be minimized enough to meet the time parameters for Mass.
- Continue to prohibit passing of the collection plate. Baskets will be stationed at the entrances for attendees to drop off offerings.
- Offertory procession will continue to be suspended. The elements of bread (especially the hosts for distribution to the faithful) and wine will be covered to eliminate or minimize contamination.

(b) Sacred Space

- Ensure effective air circulation via HVAC system or opening of windows.
- Temporarily discontinue use of shared hymnals or prayers books in the church.
- Continue to refrain use of holy water in fonts.

(c) HOLY COMMUNION

- Reception of the Precious Blood from the chalice will continue to be suspended.
- Reception of Holy Communion on the tongue will continue to be discouraged.
- There will only be one line for Holy Communion. No side-by-side standing.
- For those opting to receive Holy Communion, approach the minister one pew at a time, observing the minimum social distance between individuals who are not members of the same household.
- A hand sanitizer 'station' will be placed at the front of the line for those who wish to sanitize just before receiving Holy Communion.
- Refer to the tutorial video for observing proper use of masks while receiving Communion.
- Distribution of the Sacred Host should be carefully 'placed' into the hand of the communicant, avoiding 'skin to skin' contact between minister and communicant.

(d) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)

- EMHCs should wear masks and sanitize hands before and after distribution. They are to avoid, as best as they could, touching the hands of the communicants.
- In the case of accidental touching, the EMHC stops and sanitizes their own hands before moving on to the next communicant. A hand sanitizer and small table will be available nearby to for this situation.
- Hands should always be re-sanitized after touching or removing the face mask.

5. **SANITATION.**

- Pews, commonly touched surfaces (such as door handles) and restrooms must be sanitized after each Mass.
- Sacristans will ensure proper washing and sanitizing of sacred vessels after each Mass.
- For daily Mass, we would ask those in attendance to help sanitize after the Mass.
- For Sunday Masses, a volunteer sanitation crew is needed to ensure our worship space is sanitized after each Mass.

6. **ADORATION and CONFESSION.**

- We are scheduling a community Eucharistic Adoration every Wednesday 6pm at St. Dominic where people can adore the Blessed Sacrament in person. This time of adoration will also be live-streamed so people at home can join us virtually.
- Please enter ONLY through the south doors. Use the automatic door buttons so you do not have to touch the door handles.
- Social distancing still needs to be observed and adorers are asked to only occupy designated pews.
- During this time, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered in the cry room. As such, the cry room will be closed off from the outside and can only be accessed from within the church. The penitent will be stationed a safe distance away from the confessor.