

Liturgical Preparedness Plan for Mass at St. Charles During the Covid-19 Epidemic

These guidelines are based on the Directives from the Archdiocesan Office of Worship on behalf of the Archbishop. They are designed to avoid transmission of disease, especially to the most vulnerable, and to ensure that we are allowed to continue to exercise the freedom of worship. If the following directions are observed carefully, the probability of anyone contracting Covid-19 by coming to Mass at St. Charles is extraordinarily low, all the while recognizing that the prevention of contracting an infectious disease can never be absolute by its very nature.

- **All Covid-19 positive persons or those who have been exposed to them, those who are symptomatic and experiencing illness, a cough, or known to be an asymptomatic carrier of the Covid-19 virus, and those who have traveled outside the U.S. must not come to church**
- No person is obligated to attend public liturgies and the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation continues to be suspended for the duration of the pandemic
- Persons over age 65 and those with pre-existing health conditions that would put them at higher risk of death from the Covid-19 virus are encouraged to avoid public gatherings
- Those unable to come to Mass may contact the priest or deacon to arrange for Holy Communion at home
- All door handles, pews, and restrooms are sanitized each day and after every Mass
- Gloves are *not* to be worn *to* or *in* church
 - The continuous wearing of gloves spreads disease and are not permitted for the reception of Holy Communion
- The use of face masks is strongly urged by the Archdiocese (but not absolutely required)
 - Children under 2 years of age should not wear masks
 - According to CDC guidelines, the wearing of face masks has not been shown to prevent contracting the virus (except in medical settings), but can help prevent those infected from spreading the virus to others
- You are asked to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet with all persons not in your household both inside and outside the church proper
- The outer church doors will be kept open or will be opened by greeters as needed
- The maximum number of persons in church is 250
 - Accordingly, **sign up for Mass will be required** by either using the parish website or contacting the parish office
- Just prior to entering the church proper you will encounter volunteers who will assist you by
 - Checking you in by your reservation
 - Asking you to sanitize your hands using the pump dispensers provided containing a 70% alcohol solution
 - Giving you the opportunity to place your parish donation envelope in the basket provided (there will be no Offertory collection or gift procession)
 - Asking you to pick up a copy of the Bulletin containing a worship aid (which will not be used by anyone else and must be taken home after Mass)

- Bathroom needs should be addressed either prior to coming to church or prior to entering the church proper so as to avoid interfering with the check-in process
- Parishioners are requested to refrain from touching the face once the hands have been sanitized
- Hymnals will not be used and the Holy Water fonts are emptied
- Congregational singing is suspended for the time being
- Ushers in the church will direct your seating in “every other pew”
 - Members of the same household may sit together leaving enough distance from non-family members in the same pew
- The Cry Room will be closed for the time being
- There will be additional Handicap pews to accommodate those in need
- Distribution of Holy Communion is not permitted during Mass but will be distributed immediately afterwards
 - Communion is to be distributed in the hand
 - Those unable to receive Communion in the hand may discuss the matter with the pastor to seek an alternative
 - Those distributing Communion will sanitize their hands with 70% alcohol solution and will be wearing a face mask
 - Communion will be distributed a section at a time (directions to be given at Mass) and persons coming forward to receive will need to maintain 6 feet distance from those not in the same household
- After Mass and/or distribution of Communion, parishioners are asked to leave in silence and not return to their pews
- There is to be no congregating in the atrium or on church grounds following Mass
- **In view of the extra time needed to check in, parishioners must come no later than 15 minutes prior to Mass time**

We are acutely aware of the hardships suffered by all during this time of pandemic and are saddened that such stringent requirements are imposed for the celebration of Mass. We are committed, though, to not only the worthy celebration of the mysteries of our Faith, but to do so in a manner which does not threaten the health of our beloved parishioners. We ask for your continued patience and understanding in these challenging times as we all pray for the resolution of this pandemic and the grace of perseverance in the Faith.

Fr. Troy Przybilla
Pastor

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rev. 6-5-20