

St. Michael the archangel church Cleveland

Guidelines for Celebrating Holy Mass During Coronavirus Pandemic

May 21, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Michael the Archangel in Cleveland,

As was announced by our diocesan administrator, Fr. Donald Oleksiak, the Ohio bishops, the college of consultors and the Dioceses of Cleveland scheduled the Solemnity of Pentecost, May 30-31, for our cautious return to public Masses, according to guidelines for social distancing. **Therefore, Saint Michael Archangel will begin the first public Sunday Masses on May 30-31, the Solemnity of Pentecost.**

We will continue the Facebook livestreaming and public masses as stated in the schedule below:

1. The “Memorial Day” week will be live stream on the Facebook page on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 8:00 AM in English and 7:30pm in Spanish.
2. The first public **Saturday mass will be on May 30th, Pentecost Vigil Mass** at 5:00 PM in English & 7:00 PM in Spanish.
3. **The first public Sunday Mass** will be celebrated on May 31st, Pentecost Sunday at 9:45 AM in English and 12 noon in Spanish.
4. After Pentecost Sunday weekly masses will be public and live stream on the Facebook page on Monday’s, Wednesday’s, and Thursday’s at 8:00 AM in English and 7:00pm in Spanish. The Saturday vigil mass will be at 5:00 PM in English & 7:00 PM in Spanish going forward.

The following protocols and directives will be put into place for St. Michael the Archangel in Cleveland:

For the common good of all, below are the EXPECTATIONS OF WORSHIPPERS:

- Those who are sick or symptomatic should **stay home**. One is always dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass due to illness.
- All parishioners should take their temperature prior to coming to Mass. If you have a temperature of 100.4 or higher (Fahrenheit) you should **stay home**.
- If you are in a high risk category due to age, underlying health conditions, or any other issue that places you at higher risk for COVID-19 or someone that you care for, you should **stay home**.

Also...it is strongly encouraged and recommended that children age 5 and under **stay home** from church to prevent them from contracting the Corona virus and the very serious heart complication that children are susceptible to from this virus.

- Attendance at St. Michael’s will be limited to 25% capacity in addition to multiple pews being roped/taped off for proper social distancing of six feet between persons/families to take place. Families who live in the same house together or who have been together during the “stay at home” order may sit together. All other persons will be seated with six feet of distance between them. This allows for us to have approximately 100 persons in church, properly social distanced.

- After reaching maximum occupancy of 25% capacity we will not be able to allow further persons into the church, even if they have been in line. At maximum occupancy, the Scranton Rd doors will be secured and closed. It is advisable to begin arriving to the church 30 minutes before mass begins.
- Parishioners should wash their hands at home before coming to church and use hand sanitizer before leaving your vehicle and before entering the church building.
- Physical distancing of a minimum of six feet in all directions will be the norm.
- Diocesan guidelines mandate that parishioners enter church through one particular set of doors and exit another. Upon arriving at St. Michael's, parishioners should line up outside of the Scranton Rd doors – following the social distancing signs on the ground – with 6 feet of distance between you and the other person. The Scranton Rd. **doors will not be opened for the weekend Masses until one half hour before the Mass you plan to attend.**
- Upon arriving through the Scranton Rd. doors, you will be asked to use **hand sanitizer. Masks will be required to enter church and during the duration of the liturgy.**
- You will be seated in an orderly fashion by an usher or hospitality minister. You most likely will not be able to sit where you or your family have previously sat in church. Your cooperation and patience with this task is greatly appreciated.
- Please follow all directives given prior to the distribution of communion. The floor will be marked with a 6 feet distance and the ushers will indicate your turn for communion. We will have a Communion station at the foot of the main altar and at the cross aisle. When approaching the priest, deacon, or Communion ministers, the communicant is to pull their mask below the chin and extend your cupped hands over the corporal cloth on the table between you and the priest or Communion minister, and with one hand resting on the palm of the other (try to form a deep cup with your hands). After responding, "Amen," the priest or Communion minister will carefully place the Communion in your hands, and then, the communicant reverently places the Eucharist in his or her mouth and immediately replaces their mask. (THIS WILL BE DEMONSTRATED AND PRACTICED BEFORE HAND SO ALL WILL UNDERSTAND).
- At the conclusion of Mass, dismissal will be in an **orderly fashion**. You will be asked to wait in your pew until dismissed by an usher or hospitality minister. When being dismissed, please exit out of the second set of doors facing Scranton Rd. (not the center doors, but the ones right of center...the ushers will help indicate where to exit) After exiting please go immediately out to your vehicle. Keep in mind that six feet of social distancing must be maintained at all times. This will prevent the congregating of persons in church during the dismissal.
- If you require use of the wheelchair entrance near the Clark Ave. entrance of the church, please proceed to that entrance and you will be greeted by an usher or hospitality minister; the same applies when leaving/exiting church.
- Missalettes and music books will be removed for the liturgy. A worship aid will be provided, so please take the worship aid with you and do not leave in the pew when you leave. The copy of the "Glory to God" and "The Creed" are yours to keep and use again for future Masses. Recycling receptacles will be available at the exit for any and all paper that you wish to dispose of.
- The offertory procession is suspended for the time being. If you have offertory envelopes or monetary donations to St. Michael's, collection baskets will be available in pre-assigned pews and can be used to

receive your donation after receiving Holy Communion. You could also do the online giving at <https://www.catholiccommunity.org/ways-to-give/donate/universal-offertory-program>.

- Congregational and choral singing at public liturgies has been suspended in the Diocese of Cleveland. Congregational singing has been shown to drastically increase the chance of spreading the coronavirus. Music will be limited to instrumental music prior to Mass, offertory, communion and postlude. All psalms, acclamations, and orations in the liturgy will be spoken. Mass will look, sound, and feel different.

Again, individuals who are in high-risk categories are strongly encouraged not to attend Mass at this time. Livestream masses through the Saint Michael Facebook page will continue for those who cannot assist mass in person. Likewise, anyone feeling sick or experiencing symptoms should stay home. Do not expect that being in a sacred space will make you immune to the coronavirus or that God will prevent you from contracting the virus at church.

The pandemic is not over. Attending Mass will come with the risk of contracting the coronavirus.

As has been the case since the beginning of the pandemic, the general dispensation from the Sunday and holy day obligation continues per the bishops of the Ohio Catholic Conference.

These guidelines have been put into place for your safety, however there is still risk. As we enter the new phase of a cautious return to public Masses in our parish communities across the Diocese of Cleveland and at St. Michael the Archangel Cleveland, we ask for your cooperation and patience in all of these directives as we begin welcoming parishioners and community members back into the physical church space. There will be challenges and frustrations. Let's all strive for progress, not perfection. The last thing that anyone wants is to cause the illness or death of their priest or a fellow parishioner, or to contribute to a rebound effect that would cause public worship to be suspended again.

You may also read other helpful information for the faithful across the Diocese of Cleveland online in the Forward in Christ web portal: <https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/forward-in-christ/worship-guidelines>

Please continue to watch Saint Michael Archangel Facebook page and the parish website (<https://www.smacleveland.net/>) in the coming days for more information from St. Michael the Archangel parish as we engage in this process.

In Christ, Our Hope,

Fr. Mark R. Riley
Pastor