



What to Expect When You Return to Mass

The greatest commands in scripture are to love God and your neighbor. We must do both as we return to Mass after the COVID-19 lockdown. We will be overjoyed to receive the Eucharist and careful to protect our neighbors and ourselves. These instructions will help you prepare for new procedures.

Parishes with multiple church buildings may use only one or two so they can focus on keeping them sanitized. Outdoor Mass on parish property, with the faithful seated in cars, is an option.

No one is currently obligated to attend Mass. **If you feel ill, are older than 64 or have health issues, you should stay home**, due to your higher risk from COVID-19. If you need pastoral care, contact the parish.

The number of people at Mass will be limited according to public health guidelines. At weekend Mass, which will resume on June 6-7, social distancing of six feet (for all but families living under the same roof) means that churches can use only about 25% of normal seating capacity. Daily Mass will resume June 1 with a limit of 25 people but is scheduled to increase on June 8 to 25% of seating capacity.

You may need to sign in so you can be contacted if someone at the Mass is later found to have COVID-19 exposure.

To enter the church, **you must wear a mask** and remove it only to come forward to receive Communion. **Everyone must use the hand sanitizer available at church entrances.** Ushers will be at the door to direct you. The number of entrances and exits may be limited so they can be continually sanitized.

Everyone must stay at least six feet apart, except those living in the same household. Family groups can stay close together. Pews and aisles will be marked so you know where to sit or stand. You will need to keep socially distanced everywhere on church property, including the steps, parking lot and restrooms.

There will be no holy water, offertory procession or passing of the sign of peace. The Precious Blood will not be distributed, due to the risk from saliva. Only priests, deacons and seminarians who have reached the stage of acolyte will distribute Communion, which will occur at the end of Mass.

Ushers will guide the faithful to come forward one pew at a time or two carloads at a time. **Those who wish to receive must temporarily remove their masks.**

Due to the risk of contaminating the minister's fingers with saliva, everyone is strongly encouraged to receive Communion in the hand. Gloves cannot be worn while receiving Communion in the hand. For safety reasons, your non-dominant hand should be placed over your dominant hand, holding your fingers flat to avoid contact with the minister's fingers. No one should reach out to receive.

Those who choose to receive on the tongue must tilt their head back and fully extend their tongue until the host is placed there. If the minister suspects he has touched a recipient's hand or mouth, he will pause to use hand sanitizer.

At the end of indoor Masses, ushers will release you one pew at a time to go home. At outdoor Masses, you may drive home after saying a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

If we all take these steps prayerfully, with hearts filled with love for God and our neighbors, we will hasten the day when we can again gather for large celebrations.

May God bless you and keep you.