

“KEEPING SUNDAY ALL WEEK”

SITUATION

Because of the Coronavirus, the reopening of the churches and parish services is going to be gradual. The timeline results from State and diocesan regulations and plans. In each church building, there is to be space between pews in use and (for other than family groups) preferably a 6-foot distance between each worshipper. Considering that our regular weekend population numbers 2000+ across nine Masses in three locations, much planning has been required in order to make the Eucharistic celebration available to as many people who wish to attend. Considering that the demographic most in danger of compromised health is those aged 65+ (and they often tend to be the largest population participating in services) I have been attentive to them in these plans. **As the “obligation” to attend Mass will continue to be suspended for the time, we need to “Keep Sunday” all week.**

Although the present situation is unprecedented in recent memory, the Church has a tradition of keeping Sunday beyond the first day of the week. By tradition, the Easter Octave celebrates Easter all week. Each day is viewed as “Easter”. Ideally, we are so affected by what we experience on Sunday that we are changed people, better at Christianity, throughout the days following.

REMEDY

There are three locations for the celebration of the Mass. The requirement has been made that sanitization must occur between Masses. The times and locations, under these conditions, are of serious consideration. Staff/volunteers will be necessary to make sanitizing possible. Keeping in mind the great limit on the possible attendance at an individual service:

- A) Eight Masses have been scheduled (temporarily) for the WEEKEND with at least 2 hours between Masses to provide for cleaning. Social distancing (S.D.) of 6 feet between participants (and in front and behind) will drastically reduce our attendance capacity.

	Capacity	S.D.
SSJ	850	124
SMOS	650	101
SEAS	625	72

- B) The Mass schedule will be reviewed and MAY change as we notice more folks are attending regularly.
- C) Attendance will be regulated and scheduled through a “sign-up genius” site. Strangely enough, reservations will be required.
- D) Ushers will be charged to count those who enter through designated entrances so as to meet the limit per masses of those in attendance.
- E) For those who cannot enter because of the set limit...SSJ is equipped for live-streamed services.

The process has already taken place to provide for a radio frequency so that those who must remain in their cars can listen to the Mass (in addition to viewing on phones/iPad). Those who attend at SSJ would be offered Eucharist in the parking lot following Mass following a prescribed order.

- F) Weekday Masses would continue at 8:30 a.m. & Noon. Typically, the regular attendance is made up of those 65+. Because there are already two sites in use per day, cleaning will not be a great issue. Because of the live-stream, SSJ would temporarily be a site each day for a Mass. The restriction of 25 maximum would be in place with regard to numbers in attendance. On June 8 that maximum will increase.
- G) Social distancing (6 ft. apart, in front and behind) and masks would be required in all situations.

PROPOSAL

Those who do not work during the week would be strongly encouraged to attend Mass (and extend Sunday) to a weekday. That will provide for smaller groups of those within the demographic 65+, and allow for continued safety precautions. As there would be no obligation to attend on Sunday, those who attend during the week could still make use of the livestream from SSJ. Every effort would be made to offer celebrations of the Mass that are worthy and beyond what a typical weekday Mass would afford. This effort would take pressure off of the Sunday celebrations and allow those who cannot attend on a weekday to do so on the weekend. Those who are accustomed to attending everyday will be strongly encouraged to allow others to attend and not plan to participate in person every day.

PROTOCOL

All entering the church must wear masks. The seating will be designated so as to provide for 6-foot distancing. Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrances. Expectations will be that participants will make use of it upon entering and suggesting it be used upon departure from the church.

Participants are to be attentive to personal health and the health of those with whom they share a home. If you or a resident in your home has been infected, you will not be admitted to the church.

Hymnals will not be available. If bulletins are available, they should be used once and then deposited in a trash can upon exit, or you may take them home with you. Online bulletins will continue.

Ushers (wearing masks) will count those who are entering the church through designated entrances. When the limit for the Mass is met at SSJ, ushers will direct participants to remain in their cars and tune to 96.8 FM. When the limit is met at SMOS and SEAS, the doors will be closed.

It is important for all of us to recognize that this circumstance is temporary. It is incumbent on all of us to consider that this different Mass attendance circumstance is better than what we have experienced in the last two months.