

The Roman Catholic Parishes of Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, and South Portland, Maine

Dear Parishioners,

As we prepare to celebrate Pentecost on Sunday, we call on the Holy Spirit to come down upon us during these uncertain times. Let us take a few moments to breathe and recite the Serenity Prayer.

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to accept the things I can and
Wisdom to know the difference.*

With this prayer for serenity, courage and wisdom, we are asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we begin welcoming parishioners into our churches for Mass beginning the weekend of June 6 and 7. Under the guidance of Governor Mills' Executive Orders, the Maine CDC guidelines, and Diocesan protocols, our Eucharistic celebrations will look very different. It is my hope, in this letter, to provide an outline of the procedures that will be implemented, with the objective of keeping everyone safe while making the Eucharist available.

Here are the procedures we are initially adopting:

If you are sick, you are asked to stay home.

No more than 50 people can be in attendance at any Mass. That includes the priest, lector, organist, cantor, and attendants.

By signing up to attend a Mass, you authorize the parish to share your contact information (name, phone number, and email address) with public health authorities only in the event that someone attending the Mass you attended tests positive for Covid-19. These lists will be kept in the office for 21 days and then destroyed.

Everyone will need to make a reservation for all Masses.

Parishioners with Internet can click on the WeShare Link on our website. It will be activated Monday, June 1 at 12PM. Reservations will be closed on Friday, June 5 at 11AM. During that time, you can sign up for one Mass Saturday June 6 thru Friday, June 12.

For those without Internet access, please call and speak directly to Julie Cannon 883-0334. She will make a reservation for you while you are on the phone.

You can call to make a reservation on:

Monday, June 1 from 12PM to 3PM

Tuesday, June 2 – Thursday, June 4 from 9AM to 3PM

Friday, June 5 from 9AM-11AM

Please arrive at Mass 15 minutes early.

Please stand 6 feet apart, physically distancing while waiting to go into the Church.

Please wear a mask from the time you leave your car.

Please check in with the first attendant at the door. They will have the list of those with reservations.

Walk to the second attendant – receive hand sanitizer – if you have a donation envelope please place it in the basket.

The third attendant will seat you – Seating will be done from the front to the back.

Once you are seated, you are asked to please remain in your pew.

At communion, please wait for the attendant to direct you to go forward to receive the Eucharist.

There will be tape on the floor to help you maintain the 6ft spacing.

During these difficult times, I am encouraging everyone to receive the Eucharist in the hand rather than on the tongue, as a sign of Christian charity towards those who would receive Holy Communion afterwards.

Any parishioner in attendance can choose not to receive Holy Communion if they are not comfortable doing so at this time.

Please walk all the way around and back into your pew (please do not cut through the aisle).

At the end of Mass, please wait for the attendants to dismiss you. We will be dismissing from the back to the front.

The Bishop and the CDC have stated, *No social gatherings are allowed before or after any Mass.* Therefore, we ask you to please go directly to your cars.

Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions and who might be at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are asked not to attend.

For some, the opening of our churches is happening too slowly, while others feel it is happening too fast. It is important to remember the dispensation from the Sunday Obligation will remain in effect until the Governor, the Maine CDC, and Bishop Deeley deem it safe for large groups to gather. Bishop Deeley, in his May 22 correspondence stated, "Some of the restrictions may seem to be too cautious for the faithful who wish to return to public Masses at this time. However, ensuring the safety and health of our clergy, employees, students, volunteers, parishioners, and the greater community remains our top priority."

Please know that there may be changes on the Federal, State, and Church levels at any time. This is our initial attempt for June 6 & 7. I will keep you up to date through these emails.

We will not be able to accommodate everyone each weekend. Because of work schedules, some of our parishioners will only be able to attend a weekend Mass. Out of charity, if you are able, we ask that you consider reserving a weekday Mass rather than a Sunday Mass. Our recorded Mass will continue to be posted on the website (www.cluster22.org) by 5PM on Saturdays.

For your reference, Bishop Deeley's May 13 letter is posted on the website.

Deacon Mark Tuttle will be leading a virtual session on Thursday, June 4 at 7PM. This gathering will include a combination of readings, lessons, and prayers to the Holy Spirit. You can email Michelle Valcourt, michelle.valcourt@portlanddiocese.org or Deacon Mark, mark.tuttle@portlanddiocese.org for more information.

I look forward to seeing all of you in person once again. Thank you again for all that you are doing to support our parishes. Be assured of my prayer support and I ask that you pray for me and all our staff who continue to serve on your behalf.

Sincerely,



Msgr. Paul F. Stefanko