

SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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May 8, 2020

Dear parishioners of St. Mary's,

As we have given permission to slowly open our churches for public Masses, we will slowly re-start the process as we go through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of our current pandemic which is not over yet. In order to protect our most vulnerable people in our community and as we follow the mandated guidelines and 6' social distancing, we can only serve a partial number of people due to our current space and limitations.

We will resume our public Masses at St. Mary's beginning Tuesday 12th of May.
Our Mass schedule will change just a little for the time being:

Tuesday Mass in English	12:00pm *
Wednesday Mass in Spanish	7:00pm *.....Confessions 6:00pm to 6:45pm
Thursday Mass in English	6:00pm *
Friday Mass in Spanish	7:00pm *
Saturday Mass in English	4:00pm.....Confessions 3:00pm to 3:45pm
Mass in Spanish	6:00pm
Sunday Mass in English	9:00am *
Mass in Spanish	12:00pm *
Mass in Spanish	2:30pm

* Livestream Masses

Our Holy Masses will look quite different than normal - with limited capacity, social distancing, and precautions like no holy water, no hymnals and missalettes, and no sign of peace. Therefore, we invite you to please call the office to let us know if you are making the decision to participate at any of our Masses. We do not want to turn anyone away, but we must stick to our guidelines, and whatever decision you make will probably still be the right decision. We need to be mindful and careful about ourselves, family, parents, coworkers, etc. So please use extraordinary caution and good judgment in determining if you should attend Mass.

If we run out of our limited space due to the required 6' physical distancing, you may try to attend some of our weekday Masses as an option. Please make sure to revise some of the diocesan guidelines for attending Mass which are posted in our website and Facebook platform.

Avoid attendance if you do not feel well or have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

We cannot redirect people to our parish hall because we do not have an associate priest who could help us in assisting us with another Mass there. We have blocked off every other pew, which leave us with 14 pews only, and families will be staggered in order to maintain 6' feet of distance. Upon your arrival our ushers will take you to your seat and you will exit following the instruction of our ushers. So please follow their instructions.

Everyone must wear a protective mask, hand sanitizers will be available in our vestibule to be used, no hands shaking during the sign of peace, Holy Communion will have to be received in the hand as you carefully remove your mask. Only the main church entrance will be used at this time.

Christ has not abandoned us, he remains with us all until the end of times, no matter the situation. The gift of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to endure with faith and patience these challenging times.

We will continue offering some livestream Masses on Facebook for people who will choose not to come or cannot come to our public Masses at this time. The dispensation from the Sunday obligation still remains for all Little Rock Catholics at this time.

I am aware of many Catholics' fear, anger and frustration during these past two months of suspended Masses, but think of something we can all learn from this experience as we recommit ourselves in serving God and one another. Many are struggling financially, suffering from isolation, loneliness, and not being able to receive our Holy Sacraments. However, we need to think beyond our individual rights and consider also our responsibilities toward one another, and to be mindful of one another's needs.

I am truly looking forward and praying to have all you come back to Mass, and packing our pews like normal. But it will still take a little while. We must face the reality of the moment and what we are allowed to provide, and humbly accept it.

Thank you very much for your understanding and cooperation.

Fr. Salvador Márquez-Muñoz