

Church of the Immaculate Conception

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Dearest Parishioners, as you know your spiritual well-being has been at the forefront of my concern during this pandemic requiring self-quarantine. The Masses and prayer times I have streamed from the rectory chapel have been meant for your spiritual health, well-being, and comfort. This has been at the forefront of my concern. However as important as your spiritual state has been to me, so also is your physical health. **As we prepare to reopen, I want to share a few important points, what has been done at Immaculate Conception Church, what to expect this weekend, and what will be done at every Mass for the foreseeable future.**

First a few key points:

- At all times, please be **patient** and **charitable**.
- We are excited to reopen **Pentecost** weekend (May 30-31) and welcome you back!
- Our focus is both on our **Spiritual** and **Physical** health. Let us return to worship as joyful people!
- Bishop Tobin continues to dispense everyone in the Diocese of Providence from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days until further notice.
- Anyone who has symptoms of any cold or flu-like illness **must not**, under any circumstances, attend the celebration of Mass.
- Even if you attend Mass it is not necessary to receive Holy Communion at Mass.
- Singing will be limited to reduce the spread of germs.
- Parishioners must wear masks and practice proper hand hygiene.
- Parishioners must maintain 6 feet of distance between each other (families of the same household excluded) and avoid congregating in the church.
- Church Bulletins are available online at our website (www.immcon.org) or directly at <https://parishesonline.com/find/immaculate-conception-church-02891>.
- Daily Mass readings are available online at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings> and can be followed on your phone at Mass. I also recommend the iBreviary app which is available for free.
- In spite of our best efforts, please know that there will still be a risk for anyone who attends a public Mass to contract the coronavirus. If someone were to become ill please note that it may have been contracted at any location you have visited prior to or after attending Mass.

What has been done:

- The entire church has been sanitized using commercial cleaners.
- We will only be using every third pew to ensure parishioners are 6 feet apart front and back. You will need to keep your household six feet apart from those to your left or right.
- All hymnals and missalettes have been removed from the pews due to increased risk of aerosolized particles.
- Hand sanitizer has been ordered and will be available at every entrance.
- A collection box is available at each open entrance. Please note that all money received will be counted as weekly giving unless in a marked envelope.
- All Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (EME) who will be distributing Holy Communion during this phase have been given special training on distributing Holy Communion and the protocol to use to sanitize their hands should inadvertent contact be made with a communicant. A second person will be following each EME with hand sanitizer for this purpose.
- Holy water fonts will continue to be empty.

What to expect this weekend:

- Please use the restroom before coming to Mass to limit lines and exposure. For your safety, the restrooms at ICC should only be used in an emergency.
- From the moment you leave your car, please wear a face mask while on church property (parking lot, stairs, church buildings) until you return to your car (except for those under 2, have trouble breathing, or unable to remove the mask without assistance; these should consider staying in their car or home). The only other exception to this is after you have made it to the front of the line and are at the altar rail in position waiting to receive Holy Communion.
- The doors into the church by the Adoration Chapel will be closed to facilitate counting parishioners (they can still be used as an emergency exit); you must enter the front doors or the side door (upstairs or downstairs) by the Parish Center.
- Ushers/Knights of Columbus will be counting our numbers so we stay within the 25% capacity maximum. Extra capacity will be available downstairs or you will be able to watch from your vehicle (or home) via live stream on Facebook and YouTube.
- Please sanitize your hands as you enter (using what is provided or by bringing your own).
- The opening and ending processions will be shortened.
- There will be no offertory procession.
- While a touch-free collection will be taken using the collection baskets with long handles, you are encouraged to place your offering in the collection box at the entrance of the church.
- There will be no sign of peace.
- Following the guidelines of the Dominican Thomistic Institute and as encouraged by the USCCB, **Communion will be distributed at the end of Mass**. For those in the church, the ushers will facilitate this process. Please come down the four inner aisles and exit the church using the center or edge aisles (signs with arrows have been posted). An EME will also be coming to the Parish Hall (basement) and outside for those who wish to remain in their cars.
- When receiving Communion, follow the guidance of the ushers and kneel or stand along the Communion rail at the next blue cross six feet from the previous person or family (there are four spots marked with a blue cross on each side). Once at your spot, remove your mask. You may receive **kneeling** (preferred by Father Capoverdi) **or standing** and **on the tongue** (preferred by Father Capoverdi) **or on the hand**. You may not wear gloves when receiving Holy Communion.
- Please leave the church after Mass and do not congregate inside/block the path for others to leave. You are welcome to greet others outside (staying more than six feet apart) after Mass.
- Only one household per Mass will be permitted to use the cry room. Additional families are encouraged to spread out in the Parish Hall (downstairs).

What will be done:

- The temperature will be taken of every person involved in liturgy (priest, lector, servers, organist, cantor, ushers, etc.) before every Mass.
- Every pew, bathroom, and common touch surface will be cleaned after every Mass.

Want to learn more? Check out these resources:

- <https://dioceseofprovidence.org/resuming-public-worship>
- <https://www.reopeningri.com/>
- <http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/usccb-president-reflection-and-prayer-during-coronavirus.cfm>
- <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>