

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
23880 Maddox Road
Bushwood, MD 20618

May 20, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Sacred Heart,

With great joy and gratitude to God, I write to inform you that we are able to once again offer public Masses starting Tuesday, May 26, with our first weekend of public Masses on **Saturday, May 30 & Sunday, May 31**. Our parish staff and volunteers have been working very hard to establish a plan that does everything we reasonably can to make this a safe reopening for those who are able to attend.

The seriousness of this pandemic dictates that we follow the guidelines and safety measures given by State authorities, health officials, and the Archdiocese of Washington. Things will be a little different at first, but trained ushers will be present to assist you at all weekend Masses. Please take a moment to read the following policies, and know that you can call the parish with any questions you might have.

Mass Obligation Dispensed

The dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation remains in effect, and you may have to make the difficult decision to remain at home even as we offer public Masses. This would include those with COVID-19 or exposed to it, as well as those with upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms or underlying medical conditions, the sick, the elderly, those who are living with any individual at risk, or those who still do not feel comfortable being in a public setting. When in doubt, out of charity for others, please stay home.

The 8:00 A.M. Mass at Sacred Heart and the 10:30 A.M. Mass at Holy Angels will continue to be livestreamed on Facebook, and uploaded afterward onto YouTube for those who cannot access the Facebook livestream.

Face Masks & Hand Sanitizer

You will be required to wear face masks for the entirety of Mass. Protective gloves are optional (latex-free, if possible) but must be removed prior to receiving Communion on the hand. We will also ask everyone to use hand sanitizer prior to entering the church. Sanitizer will be available at the church entrance, but please bring your own if possible.

Weekday Masses & Adoration

Beginning Tuesday, May 26, weekday Masses and Adoration at both Sacred Heart and Holy Angels will be offered at their usual times and locations.

Weekend Mass Schedule

Beginning May 30 & 31, the weekend Mass schedule will be as follows:

- Saturday, 4:30 P.M. at Holy Angels
- Saturday, 6:00 P.M. at Sacred Heart*
- Sunday, 6:30 A.M. at Sacred Heart
- Sunday, 8:00 A.M. at Sacred Heart (live-streamed)
- Sunday, 10:30 A.M. at Holy Angels (live-streamed)

*Please note that I am adding an additional option for Saturday Vigil Mass during this unprecedented time. Given the current restrictions, we are required to limit the attendance of each Mass rather significantly. To accommodate all our parishioners, I therefore wanted to offer the maximum amount of weekend Masses. As a priest, I am strictly limited by Canon law to celebrate no more than two Masses on Saturdays and three Masses on Sundays. Since we already have three Masses on Sundays, the logical addition was to add a second Vigil Mass.

Confessions

Confessions will continue to be offered in a way that protects privacy as well as each other's safety. Sacred Heart will have a confession space in the chapel adjacent to the sacristy. Holy Angels will continue to use the confession space in the church vestibule. The schedule for Confessions will return to the normal times: weekdays during Adoration, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning before each Mass.

Liturgical Ministers

Only Deacon Lloyd, Seminarian Chris, and myself will be allowed in the sanctuary during Mass. No sacristans, lectors, altar servers, or ministers of communion will be serving at this time.

Missalettes

All Hymnals and Missalettes have been removed, as well as other paper resources that could potentially spread germs. The Scripture Readings for Mass can be found at www.usccb.org. You are welcome to bring your own printed copy of the readings (or *Magnificat* or other devotional) or even to download the readings onto your phone for personal use during Mass. Unfortunately, choirs are not able to gather at this time, and music and singing must be limited.

Seating & Attendance

When arriving at church, please keep socially distanced from other households as you enter. Please allow extra time to be seated and understand that attendees may not be able to choose where they sit. Ushers will assist with seating as you arrive. We will open the church and start seating 30 minutes before Mass begins. Please remain in your vehicles until the doors open to enter the church and please do not congregate by the entrance before or after Masses. Sacred Heart will use the main entrance; Holy Angels will use only the two side entrances.

Due to the current restrictions on how many can safely be seated in the church, there is a chance that we will reach maximum capacity and therefore not be able to admit some people. I expect that that we will be able to seat everyone that shows up for Mass. However, if maximum capacity is reached at any given Mass, those who would still like to attend would be welcome to do so from their vehicles, viewing the livestream if possible, and enter the church to receive Communion after those inside have received.

Communion

All Catholics present who are in a state of grace are invited to receive Communion at this time. Those who have health concerns and do not wish to receive sacramental Communion may make an Act of Spiritual Communion.

When you approach for Communion, please remain six feet from others in the line. Markers will be on the floor and ushers will direct the flow. When it is your time to receive, lower your mask, receive the Eucharist, and replace your mask. It is permitted to receive Communion in the hand (with gloves removed) or on the tongue. However, please consider that receiving on the tongue is inherently more of a risk of contagion.

If the minister accidentally touches anyone's hand, he will immediately pause and disinfect his own hands. The minister will pause and disinfect his hands after each communicant who receives on the tongue, even if no physical contact is made.

Collection

Collection baskets will not be passed around as normal, but a basket will be available for contributions as you exit the church. The best option, however, is to sign up for Faith Direct online giving. See our website for details or give the parish a call.

Dismissal

At the conclusion of Mass, the ushers will dismiss rows beginning from the back to the front of the church. After the dismissal of the last pew, we will be sanitizing all the pews and seating areas, common area surfaces, and restroom common surface areas.

Please be patient with us in implementing this plan and understand that we will make any changes deemed necessary to assure the safety of those attending, while also recognizing the importance of making the sacraments available.

May the peace of the Risen Lord be with you!

In Christ,

Father Stephen Wyble