



**ST. MARY MAGDALEN PARISH**

7 SHARPLEY ROAD

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19803

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May 21, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

St. Mary Magdalen Parish is targeting an early June opening, following the Governor's and Diocese's guidelines based on strict social distancing and severely reduced capacity. Our SMM Re-Opening Task Force will oversee the implementation of these rules and has listed the changes below. Prior to coming to mass, please take time to familiarize yourself with these important new procedures.

**General Information:**

- **The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass issued on March 12, 2020 remains in place for the Diocese of Wilmington.** We will continue to have masses available on our website [www.smmchurch.org](http://www.smmchurch.org).
- Those who are symptomatic or who have or may have been exposed to the virus within 14 days are not permitted to enter the church, in accordance with the State of Delaware health directives. All attendees are asked to check their temperature at home before coming to church for any reason. Likewise, anyone with a persistent cough or who otherwise does not feel well should not come to church.
- Parishioners who are particularly vulnerable (e.g. over the age of sixty, existing heart or lung conditions, diabetes, or otherwise immuno-compromised) are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED**, for their own health, to stay home.
- **Attendance is limited to 150 people.** Once we have reached that number, we unfortunately are not permitted to allow any other people in church.
- **All are to wear a mask at all times while in church, except the priest celebrant.** The priest-celebrant is *permitted* to wear a covering during Mass but not *required* except during the distribution of Communion. **Please bring your own mask.**
- **All must sanitize their hands upon entering the church,** hand sanitizers provided.
- All items will be removed from the pews; no hymnals, missals, prayer cards. Printed aids will be provided that must be disposed of after each liturgy.
- We will be designating safe distancing in the pews by marking off sections. Members of the same household may sit together, but there should be at least 6 feet of separation otherwise.
- Enter through the front door, practicing social distancing, and exit through the side doors. Signage will be posted.
- Pews and other surfaces in church will be regularly & thoroughly disinfected.

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*Know Christ. Be Christ for Others.*

### **Celebration of the Eucharist:**

- Liturgical Ministers (readers, ushers, sacristans and minister of Holy Communion) will be limited and scheduled in advance. There will be no altar servers in Phase I.
- We will not have a choir and no presentation of gifts by members of the assembly.
- Sunday masses will balance reverence with brevity.
- No one will be permitted in the sacristies for any reason except the priest celebrant, the seminarian, and the designated sacristan.

### **Directives for the Distribution of Holy Communion:**

- The distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful will be moved to the end of mass, after the final blessing to minimize movement during mass. Ushers will indicate when it is time for your pew to receive communion, this will help to facilitate an orderly, measured exit as well.
- The distribution of the Precious Blood continues to be suspended until further notice.
- Communion in the hand is strongly recommended. Communicants have a right to receive on tongue if they so choose. However, we are to strongly encourage them not to. If they must, then they should wait and come forward at the end of the line.

### **Instructions for those receiving Holy Communion**

- Those who have health concerns and do not wish to receive sacramental Communion may make an Act of Spiritual Communion
- Those who will not receive communion should not come forward with hands crossed for a blessing; there is a blessing for everyone at the end of Mass.
- Children who will not receive communion but who are old enough to remain quietly in their pew should do so, and not get in the line for Communion.
- When you approach for Communion, please remain six feet from others in the line and from the minister. We will mark spots on the floor with tape. When it is your time to receive, keep your mask on and remain six feet away from the minister while he shows the Host and says, The Body of Christ. After you respond, Amen, approach the minister.
- Receive the Host in your hand, and then step six feet to the side, away from the minister. Then loosen your facial covering, consume the Host, and replace the facial covering.
- Communion will be distributed after the final blessing with people leaving church after. No gathering is allowed.
- Exit through the side doors indicated.

These guidelines have been put in place and will be enforced for the safety of all those attending Mass. As restrictions are lifted, we will react accordingly with changes to our procedures. Reminder, the best place to find the most up to date information as it pertains to SMM Parish is still [www.smmchurch.org](http://www.smmchurch.org).

God Bless,

*Father Kirk*