



ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Guidelines and Safety Measures for Parishioners During Reopening

May 6, 2020

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As of Monday, May 11, 2020, St. Joseph Parish will begin to gather for the celebration of liturgies. I look forward to seeing so many smiling faces at Masses, and it will be good to be back together with parishioners in front of the Blessed Sacrament, to receive Jesus, and continue to rejoice in Our Lord's Resurrection.

I want to reassure you that we at St. Joseph Parish are staying up to date each day with new information and wish to be as transparent with you as possible. We will be following all the **guidelines and safety measures outlined below** and will make necessary adjustments as we are given additional information from local or state health officials in the upcoming weeks and months.

General Guidelines:

- ***The dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation remains in place.***
- Gatherings are limited to the Sacred Liturgy, so all forms of public liturgies in churches are permitted.
- All other parish and school activities remain restricted, including after-Mass gatherings such as coffee and rolls, funeral luncheons, wedding receptions, etc.
- The Bishop has restricted outdoor Mass.

The following are encouraged to stay at home:

- Those who are sick or those at risk of becoming sick
- The elderly
- People with underlying medical conditions
- Family members who live with elderly people or those who are at risk
- People who have access to those at risk in nursing institutions
- People who have or live with someone who has upper respiratory or flu like symptoms
- People who have COVID-19, live with someone who has it, or have been exposed to someone who has it

Requested Containment Practices for those attending Mass:

- Parishioners are encouraged to bring masks to wear at least during Communion.
- Priests and Acolytes will wash hands before and after Mass and use hand sanitizer before Communion.
- Hand sanitizer will be located inside each entrance to the church. Please bring your own in pocket or purse for use before Holy Communion.
- Sit in every other pew. Alternating pews are marked.
- If not a family group living together, space yourselves 6 feet apart.
- Families should sit together and children should remain with their parents or guardians.
- Resurrection Hall will be available for overflow if needed following the 6 foot rule.

- Missalettes and hymnals have been removed from pews. If desired, it is suggested to bring your own Magnificat or use a mobile app like Laudate or iBreviary to follow along with readings.
- Cough and sneeze in your sleeve.
- Place your contribution envelope in the basket provided as you enter or exit the church. The ushers will not take up the collection during Mass.
- Those who do not live under the same roof should not hold hands during the Our Father.
- We will be observing a no-contact Sign of Peace with waves, nods, bows, etc.
- Form a single file line with 6-foot intervals when processing forward to receive Holy Communion and follow the instructions of the ushers.
- Holy Communion will be distributed under the species of bread only.
- There will be three Communion lines: one down the center aisle and one down each outside aisle. Lines are taped on the floor to denote spacing and directions. Please observe the 6 foot rule when returning to pews.
- Everyone in the pew is asked to join the Communion line to avoid climbing over others or traffic issues. If you would like to receive a blessing, cross your arms over your chest or place your hand over your heart; please refrain from putting your finger up to your lips.
- Ushers will guide the dismissal of the faithful row-by-row starting with the back pews.
- Avoid gathering in the Narthex or near the doors of the church following Mass.
- Door handles, pews, and restrooms will be sanitized after each Mass.
- Attend Mass in your home Parish.
- Normal Mass times will resume with the reopening of public Masses. Sunday Mass at 9:00 will continue to be live streamed.

Requested Procedure for Receiving Confession:

- Confession will be held at the regularly scheduled times in the Heritage Room.
- Confession will be done anonymously behind a screen or curtain. Face-to-face Reconciliation will be by appointment only.
- Enter through the south door (the one facing the Rectory by the circle drive) and exit through the main front doors.
- Follow the signs and maintain a distance of 6 feet from others in line. Spacing is marked with tape on the floor.
- The door to the Heritage room will remain open to eliminate touching of door handles.
- During Confession, speak in a low voice to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals:

- Baptisms, Weddings, and Funeral services are permissible as long as they comply with the above guidelines.
- Receiving lines are not permitted.
- Receptions, meal functions, or other gatherings before or after the service are subject to the 10-person rule.

My prayer is that you and your family are safe and strengthened by God's grace during this uncertain time.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Michael G. McCabe
Pastor