



Dear Parishioners,

In just about two weeks, we will once again resume the celebration of public Sunday Mass here at St. Andrew Church. On the weekend of May 30-31, Masses will be celebrated in the church according to our new Mass Schedule:

- **Saturday Vigil Mass – 4:30 p.m.**
- **Sunday Masses – 7:30 a.m., 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**

I want to emphasize that, while we are resuming the public celebration of Mass, this does not mean that everyone should resume coming to Mass. The Bishops of Ohio have continued the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass through September 13 because the coronavirus is still a very serious threat and the danger of getting the virus or giving it to another person is increased whenever we come together in the same place. So, to stay safe, we should stay at home as much as possible. Also, please understand that we are never lightly excused from the Sunday obligation, so I hope you all realize how serious is the reason for this extraordinary dispensation. It is to protect your life and your health. While we will be doing our best to maintain a safe environment at St. Andrew by enforcing social distancing and frequent disinfection, we cannot guarantee that you will not be exposed to the coronavirus if you choose to attend Mass at St. Andrew. You assume a considerable risk by coming to church. And the priests are also assuming a risk by celebrating public Masses.

The Diocese of Columbus has issued guidelines for the faithful who wish to attend Mass, and also guidelines for precautions that parishes and churches must observe to make these public Masses as safe as possible. I am going to summarize them for you so you know what to expect should you decide to participate in Masses celebrated at St. Andrew in the coming weeks and months.

Guidelines for the Faithful

- Those persons who have ANY symptoms such as fever or cough should NOT come to church.
- Those who are at "high risk" for contracting COVID-19, including those over the age of 70 and those with serious health conditions are strongly cautioned against coming to Mass until it is safe to do so.
- Those attending must maintain hand hygiene by washing hands before coming to church, bringing their own hand sanitizer and using it after touching any surface. Also, as much as possible, avoid touching any surfaces in the church.
- Those attending Mass must maintain "social distancing" of six feet from other persons at all times when on church properties. Those in the same household need not observe distancing among themselves but as a group should remain six feet from others at all times.
- Anyone attending must wear a face mask or covering at all times except for the brief moment of receiving Communion, except for children under the age of two years. Masks should cover both your nose and your mouth.

St. Andrew Safety Plan

Here I would like to summarize the preparations we are taking at St. Andrew to implement the safety guidelines to ensure social distancing and promote hand hygiene.

- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be present near the entrances of the church.

- The church will be thoroughly disinfected before the Saturday Vigil Mass and again before our first Sunday morning Mass. All surfaces with a likelihood of being touched will be disinfected after each Sunday Mass.
- The outer and inner entrance doors to the church will remain open so people may enter and exit without touching any door handle or pushbar.
- Door #17 (the double doors through which the lower level of the church is accessed from the McCoy Rd. parking lot) will be closed and locked. The elevator, stairwell, quiet room, and restrooms will also be locked. (In the case a genuine emergency, use of the vestibule restroom will be allowed with the understanding that the individual will help with disinfecting the restroom after emergency). These precautions are being taken due to the great number of surfaces that can be contaminated in these areas and the impossibility of disinfecting these surfaces frequently enough to ensure the exposure to the COVID-19 virus is low. The sacristy is closed to all except the clergy.
- The number of participants at Mass is limited to 1/3 of the seating capacity of the church. This will allow approximately 350 persons to participate at each Mass. To ensure social distancing, seating will be available in every 3rd pew. The other pews will be taped/roped off. Persons living under the same roof may all sit together as a group in a single pew. All others must maintain a distance of 6 feet from one another while sitting in the pew (and while on church grounds).
- The aisles and floors of the church will be marked off with tape to indicate the proper spacing of people in line to receive Communion or Confession and to maintain a "one direction" flow of traffic. (The procedure for receiving Communion is described below).
- Holy water fonts will remain empty.
- Worship aids (programs) are intended for single use only. After use, please take it home with you or place it in the wastebaskets provided. Do not leave them in the pews or return them to the stacks. There will be no hymnals or missals available in the pews.
- Bulletins are available near the exits. Ushers will not distribute them so please help yourself but again, do not leave bulletins in the pews.
- We will not be "passing the basket" at the offertory. Rather, baskets will be placed inside the church where offertory envelopes and donations may be deposited as you enter or leave the church.
- There will be no Communion from the cup and no exchange of the sign of peace.

Communion Distribution

- There will be three distribution points; one from the front of the center aisle, one from the front of the far east aisle (by the stained-glass windows) and one from the front of the far west aisle (by the Stations of the Cross windows).
- Those wishing to receive Communion should line up single-file, six feet apart in the aisle adjacent to the pews in which they are seated.
- It is strongly urged that all communicants should receive Communion in the hand to reduce the danger of spreading the virus.
- Communicants should pull down their masks just enough to receive the Host. After receiving Communion, Communicants should return to their pews via the intermediate aisles, keeping the center aisle and two extreme outside aisles one-way going forward to receive, and the two intermediate aisles are one-way walking away from the altar.
- The reception of Communion is the riskiest moment, because of the proximity of persons.
- Communion ministers will sanitize hands before and after the Communion rite.
- After the conclusion of Mass, there should be no socializing in the church or vestibules and the church must be vacated quickly so disinfecting procedures can be completed before the subsequent

Mass. People should depart in an orderly way to avoid close physical contact with others or crowding the exits.

This will be the "new normal" for Masses at St. Andrew for the next while. I don't really know how long it will last. I should mention that daily Masses will resume on Tuesday, May 26, with many of the same precautions, but with fewer people in attendance. Those who desire to receive Holy Communion but are afraid to attend Mass on Sunday may consider weekday Mass as a better option.

Our Masses will be different than in the past, but it will be good to have a worshipping community assembled and to be able to receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist!

We will continue to put our Sunday Masses on YouTube so that those who continue to stay at home may participate in the Mass in that fashion.

Your Pastor,
Msgr. Stephan Moloney