

Attending Holy Mass during the COVID-19 Pandemic at Our Lady of the Lakes

Welcome back! *“It is good for us to be here”* (Mt 17:4). It is with great joy that we come together once again to worship our dear God, to listen to His word and receive Him truly present in the Eucharist. Before Holy Mass begins, please take the time to carefully read the protocols that are in place in order to minimize the risk of catching the Covid-19 virus. If you have any questions, feel free to speak with the clergy who will be happy to assist you. Please remember that **until this crisis passes, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been lifted. No one should feel obliged to come to church.** The Diocese of Duluth protocols state that this lifting of the Sunday obligation will remain in place until it is safe for all to return to church. The protocols also state: “Sunday remains the Lord’s Day so Mass can be followed on television, radio an online with a spiritual communion. Devotional practices such as an hour of silent prayer, the rosary, scripture reading, or other meditations can mark the day.”

Who should come to Holy Mass?

We look forward to everyone coming to pray again communally and spiritually, however, due to social distance requirements, we can only seat **a half of the capacity** of our church. We will keep you informed of how we will limit the seating capacity for our three church’s in our parish. Even though we will seat using social distancing guidelines, households can sit together.

We encourage those over 60, and those with pre-existing health conditions **to stay home** and avoid public gatherings, including church. Do not come to church if you are sick, coughing, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath, if you have been exposed to a sick person, or if you are caring for someone who is sick.

What can I expect when I arrive?

Please come early, as you may have to enter through a door different door. Some doors may be marked ‘enter only’ others may be marked ‘exit only’. Please avoid chatting or talking. Do not give handshakes, and remain 6 feet apart at all times. Wash your hands with sanitizer as you enter and sit in a designated pews or chairs starting from the front to the back. Go to the bathroom before you arrive, bathrooms are for emergencies only.

What should I bring?

You should bring your own hand sanitizer, if you have it, mask, and gloves. Following CDC guidelines, the Minnesota Bishops strongly encourage everyone who enters the church **to wear a mask**. Masks helps protect you and keeps you from spreading an illness you do not know you have yet. Masks cannot be placed on children under 2 years of age.

What will change with the Mass?

The essential qualities of the Mass will remain the same, but there will be obvious adjustments. Since singing is the fastest way to spread the virus, **there will be no congregational singing at this time** and there will be **no sign of peace**. We will not be taking the collection during Mass. If you wish to make a financial offering to the parish, baskets will be at the entrances of the churches for you to use. Electronic giving is also available at <https://engage.suran.com/ololp/s/give/new-gift>.

Will I be able to receive communion?

Yes, but you are not required to receive if you do not feel comfortable. Holy Communion will be distributed at the normal time during Mass. The ushers will indicate which rows of the faithful may come forward to receive Holy Communion. As you approach to receive Our Lord, please practice **social distancing**. You **cannot wear gloves** when you receive communion because of the great risk of Eucharistic particles. If you choose to receive Holy Communion on your tongue – which is the liturgical norm and therefore cannot be taken away – we ask that you please receive Holy Communion **from the priest alone**.

One final note

Expect that we will move between phases if the church authorities deem it appropriate. If you have not already done so, please sign up for our parish email notifications. To do so, just call the office at 218-568-4760 or email at stalicechurch@gmail.com. Please continue to pray for an end to the pandemic and **thank you** for all of your patience, flexibility, and understanding as we work through Phase 2 together.