

Little Flower Catholic Church in Canton, Ohio

Rules for the Adaptation of the Diocese of Youngstown Guidelines Regarding the Resumption of Public Liturgies in the Time of Public Health Concern, Sunday and Weekday Mass

May 22, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Bishops of Ohio announced that public Masses can resume on the Feast of Pentecost. Bishop Murry approved the guidelines for the Diocese of Youngstown and asked that each parish implements these recommendations in accordance with their own needs and best pastoral practices that work for them. These guidelines are considered to be temporary until it is determined safe to return to the normal circumstances. (Whatever the new normal is going to be)

I. DISPENSATION FROM THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND SUNDAY MASS

All Catholic faithful who reside in the Diocese of Youngstown and especially those who are sick, or at high risk of becoming sick are dispensed from their Sunday obligation of attending Mass until further notice. The Easter Duty obligation is extended for a period of one year from the end of the Easter Season 2020.

People who are sick, have a weak immune system and pre-existing conditions or who have been exposed to the virus and especially the elderly **ARE ASKED TO PLEASE, STAY AT HOME** and watch Mass on our *Facebook Page* or watch it on EWTN and the Diocese of Youngstown Mass celebration on CTNY. Feel free to get more information on the diocesan web page www.doy.org

II. General Guidelines

People who come to Little Flower for the celebration of Mass will be seated six (6) feet apart from one another. Families from the same household can sit together without the six (6) feet distance. Every other pew will be blocked in order to keep a safe distancing rule upheld.

1. AS YOU ENTER OUR CHURCH YOU MUST WEAR A MASK
2. IF YOU HAVE TRAVELLED ABROAD YOU NEED TO QUARANTINE YOURSELF FOR 14 DAYS.
3. Understanding the desire of many to return to church, it remains important for those who are at greater risk to refrain from returning until such time they feel comfortable and confident to do so.
4. Those who are symptomatic or who have been exposed to another with the virus within 14 days should not attend Mass in accordance with national, state and local health directives.
5. Little Flower Parish will continue to live-stream Mass, so that those unable to attend may maintain a spiritual connection with our parish.
6. Appropriate cleaning of high use areas within our church is to be done before and after each service. (We need volunteers willing to help - cleaning supplies will be provided).
7. You must make every effort to ensure appropriate physical distancing, before, during, and after worship service.

8. Our Cry Room cannot be used by anyone during the pandemic.
9. Large gatherings before or after Mass are to be discouraged. No receptions or social gatherings (*i.e. coffee/donuts*) are to be held.
10. Those attending Mass including liturgical ministers must wear masks or face coverings.
11. The amount of people able to be in restrooms at the same time is no more than one.
12. Hand sanitizers will be placed at the main entry doors to our church. You Must Sanitize Your Hands as Soon as You Enter the Church.
13. Bulletins should be available for pick-up. Hospitality ministers or ushers should not pass them out.
14. All in attendance should wash their hands before and after Mass being mindful not to touch their face, eyes, or nose.
15. All in attendance should make every effort to continually model and encourage good hygienic practices.

III. During Mass

Holy Water

16. Holy water fonts are to remain empty until further notice.

Hymnals/Missalettes

17. All hymnals/missalettes are to be removed and stored for the time being. Feel free to find the text of the liturgy in our bulletin.
18. Lectors are to lower their mask during the time of reading the Word of God.

Offertory Collection

19. A stationary acrylic box is placed in front of the altar to place your contributions, ushers **will not** be collecting contributions.

The Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace

20. Physical contact during the *Lord's Prayer (holding hands)* and the *Sign of Peace* is suspended. For *the Sign of Peace* those present are encouraged to bow to others and offer words of peace.

Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion

21. The priest and the Eucharistic ministers will wear masks for the distribution of the Holy Communion.
22. It is highly encouraged and strongly recommended that the reception of Holy Communion be given in the hand.

Distribution of Holy Communion on the Tongue

23. Out of pastoral necessity and urgency, those desiring to receive Holy Communion on the tongue are permitted to do so. In this instance, they are to be last in line and receive only from the priest. In the unfortunate circumstance that the priest's fingers come in contact with the mouth and/or saliva of the communicant he must immediately sanitize his fingers before continuing with the next in line.

24. Reception of the Precious Blood from the chalice by the assembly is temporarily suspended. Accommodation have been made for low-gluten hosts to be available for those with gluten intolerance.
25. The location of stations for the distribution of Holy Communion will remain the same but in order to facilitate orderly movement and to maintain proper physical distance 6 feet away from each other we will go one-side at the time. One-way traffic patterns are encouraged.
26. Appropriate spacing between individuals in the Communion Procession is to be maintained.
27. Holy Communion is not to be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand with gloves.
28. When approaching the minister, the communicant is to pull their mask (*if wearing one*) below their chin. The minister, after saying, "Body of Christ," is to carefully place (drop) the host into the hand of the communicant avoiding any incidental contact. Communicants, after responding "Amen," reverently place the Eucharist in their mouth and replace their mask.
29. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available by appointment only. Please call the parish office to make an appointment. We will not use our confessional during the pandemic. Instead, individual confessions will be held at the Grotto. The priest and the penitent will both wear masks. Only people with serious mortal sins should consider going to confession at this time.
30. First Communion children and parents as well as our RCIA candidates will be notified soon by our Coordinators of Faith Formation when we can celebrate these important sacraments.

I fully understand that some folks may be unhappy with these guidelines. Please, understand that they are necessary to keep all of us safe and healthy.

Recently, there was a case reported about a priest who contracted Covid-19 and infected five other priests from his religious order. The 79-year-old priest died of Coronavirus. Others from his community are fighting for their lives. We must be smart and vigilant while adjusting our lives and liturgical celebrations during this time of pandemic. By following these guidelines, you are protecting your own life and the lives of others.

Finally, I wish to inform you that we will resume our weekday Masses on Tuesday, May 26th. Please, understand that people are dying by thousands and only God knows how long this pandemic going to last. If you have any questions you can contact the parish office or myself via my e-mail; chenyk@youngstowndiocese.org or by phone at 330-494-2759.

With all my prayers for your health and well-being,

Sincerely in Christ I remain,

Fr. Chris