

Easter 2020

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Sunday Mass Livestream

Dear Parishioners:

In a week we will be returning to public weekday Masses and in two weeks we return to public Sunday Masses and the Sunday Vigil on Saturday. I am sure that many of you are anxious to return, but I also suspect that some of you are anxious about returning. I write to you today to share with you what we are doing at Holy Spirit to protect the health of our parishioners as we return to Mass. These actions are being done so that Holy Spirit will be in compliance with the directives issued by the Diocese of Cleveland, which can be found at <https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/forward-in-christ/worship-guidelines/overview>.

First and foremost, **The obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues to be dispensed until you are notified otherwise.**

Before you come to Mass:

- Please take your temperature. If it is over 100.4, please stay at home.
- Before coming, please wash your hands.
- Please bring your own hand sanitizer.

Please know that, while we will do our best to provide for you, certain supplies are difficult for us to obtain given that every other parish is also in need of them.

Coming to Mass:

- We are allowed to plan to accommodate one-half of the recommended church capacity with proper social distancing.

The size and shape of Holy Spirit church will make this easier than in some other parishes. The fire code states we have a capacity of 850; therefore, we can have up to 425 at a Mass. During the regular functioning of the parish, 850 is about the average attendance across the four Masses; therefore, the numbers should not be problematic for Holy Spirit.

- Holy water fonts will be empty.
- Drinking fountains will not be in service.
- The church will be cleared of all paper, books, pamphlets, bulletins, tables etc. **No missalettes will be used.**

For those used to following along with the readings, you may use an electronic device, though I encourage instead that you review the reading in the week before the Sunday Mass. Many commentators on the Liturgy say that not having the text in front of us is the ideal since "faith comes through hearing" (Romans 10:17).

- We ask that you use the bathroom only in case of extreme need.
- **In accord with diocesan instruction, those attending Mass at Holy Spirit must wear a mask upon entering the church and through the**

Liturgy. Think “mask from car to car.”

- Sanitation stations will be set up at the Church entrance for your use if you are unable to bring your own sanitizer.
- Pew seating will be marked for 6 feet of separation, every other row to be occupied.
- Family units living under the same roof obviously are allowed to sit close together.

At Mass:

- According with directives of the Diocese of Cleveland: “In light of this scientific and medical information, congregational singing and choral singing at public liturgies is temporarily suspended, and church choir rehearsals are not permitted until further notice.”
- The priest will enter from the sacristy.
- We will not be utilizing servers. The items for Mass will be placed near the altar and the priest will lead the Collect and Prayer after Communion from there instead of at the chair.
- The collection will not be taken during Mass but offerings may be placed in the baskets at the marble “stations.”

The best scientific studies say that the Covid virus can live on paper products for no more than four days; therefore, the pouches will be taken into the Sacristy to be stored until the counters can safely process the donations after several days.

- There is not be an offertory procession.
- The hosts will be placed in the covered ciboria before Mass and will be placed on the credence table.
- The invitation to exchange a sign of peace is suspended.

Communion Procedures:

- The use of Hosts from the tabernacle will be avoided.
- The distribution of the Precious Blood is suspended for the foreseeable future.
- There will be three communion stations. The priests and deacon, the Ordinary Ministers of Communion, will, as much as possible, distribute Communion.
- The priest(s) and deacon will use hand sanitizer before the distribution of Eucharist and will wear masks for the distribution of Communion.
- There will be a new pattern for the Communion procession, please see the guides on the website (<https://uploads.weconnect.com/mce/4d134bc072212ace2df385dae143139da74ec0ef/Reopening%20Communion%20Flow.pdf>) which will explain and illustrate the new pattern.
- Please, if possible, use your personal sanitizer on your hands before leaving the pew.
- Markings will be placed on the aisle to indicate the six-foot social distancing norm. Please do not leave your pew until the next aisle marker is unoccupied, then proceed to that point and wait for the one in front of you to clear, until you reach the Communion minister.
- Please approach the minister, lower/remove your mask, receive Communion, replace your mask, and return to your pew.
- Parishioners are strongly encouraged by diocesan instruction to opt to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
- Those who are wanting to receive Holy Communion on the tongue are asked to come to the priest in the center aisle and at the very end of the

Communion line.

- At the end of Mass, rows will be dismissed to allow for social distancing to be maintained.

Think: do like what you would at a wedding, waiting for the row before you to file out.

After Mass:

- Sadly, I must ask that you do not congregate in the church, including the narthex.

It is preferable that you do not congregate in the parking lot, if you must do so for necessary business, please keep your mask on (“mask car to car.”)

- I hope to be in the narthex to wave as you leave. It has been too long!
- The Church, as well as the narthex, sacristy and restrooms, will be cleaned between each Mass.

Much help will be needed to clean the church between Masses. We will be asking for volunteers to assist us in this process. To facilitate this, I ask that you arrive for Mass no sooner than (10) minutes before the start of Mass.

Weekday Masses begin on Monday, May 25, 2020. Until further notice, all Masses will take place in church and not the chapel. The above guidelines are to be observed at weekday Masses.

I readily admit that celebrating the Eucharist as described above is far from ideal. Some of the things we have to do fly in the face of the good liturgical principles I have been describing in my pastor’s column the past year. However, these are necessary for the common good and to balance out people’s hunger for the Eucharist with the needs of public health. If you find you cannot abide these practices, remember that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is dispensed for the time being. I look forward to seeing you when a greater sense of normalcy is restored.

Though Holy Spirit is doing what can be reasonably expected to insure the health and safety of her parishioners, we cannot absolutely guarantee that there is no chance of contracting the Covid-19 virus at the parish—the church cannot be a “clean room”. If, despite the parish’s precautions, you have concerns about your health, especially because you are a part of the vulnerable population, I encourage you to take advantage of the dispensation from Sunday Mass and continue the practice of a Spiritual Communion.

For those unable to attend Sunday Mass we will continue our livestreaming of the Mass. Please note that we are returning to the church for our broadcast. The church building is not ideal for broadcasting, so please be patient with us.

Thanks to all of you for your understanding and patience in this process. It will be good to have you back!

Rev. Charles F. Strebler
Pastor