



Dear Parishioners:

On Friday, May 21st, the Diocese of Cleveland issued protocols for moving beyond the restrictions put in place due to the COVID pandemic. After meeting with the Staff, The Worship Commission, and the Parish Council, I now share with you how we are implementing these protocols at Holy Spirit Parish. Though these protocols go into effect on June 2nd, most people will not see them in effect until June 6th.

- *Hand sanitizer will continue to be provided.*
- *Face masks are no longer required, but are strongly suggested for those who are not vaccinated or are otherwise vulnerable.*

Holy Spirit Parish will not require proof of vaccination at any time, unless State of Ohio mandates or Diocese of Cleveland protocols require it for some reason in the future. I just ask that out of the honesty and charity to which our faith calls us, that you be honest about your status and act accordingly.

- *The ropes on every-other pew to enforce social distancing will be removed, as will the six-foot distance dots in the aisles.*

However, **two sections of seating in the church will be designated as remaining with the social distance ropes and masks are required to sit in those sections.** Time may show if we need more or less masked and socially-distanced seating.

- *Holy Water will return to the fonts, which will be cleaned on a regular basis.*
- *Servers will resume their ministries.*

The ministry leaders will be contacting ministers to see if they are planning to return to their ministries. We are in need of sacristans, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, ushers, and servers. (While we are especially looking for servers who have completed the fourth grade or older, we also welcome adults--and even families...) If you are interested, please contact Nathan Hetrick, Director of Worship and Music at nhetrick@hspal.org.

- *We will be having an offertory procession with the gifts.*

We are working for the ideal of the monetary collection being brought forward with the bread and the wine. This may take some time to address. Until then, the collection baskets will remain in the front of the church.

- *The congregation will be invited to exchange a sign of peace.*

The Diocese's instruction states: "It should be exchanged without physical contact between persons who are not of the same household or family." I ask that we not be offended if those around us are not wanting to shake hands; a nod of the head or small wave to those around us will do fine.

- *The distribution of the Precious Blood remains suspended.*
- *The Communion ministers will continue to wear masks during distribution and sanitize before distribution of the Blessed Sacrament.*

We will be retaining for the time the method for distribution that we have been using during COVID. The celebrant and two ministers will distribute. As an Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion, as long as I am available, I will continue to help with distribution of Communion at Masses I am not celebrating.

- *Congregational singing will be encouraged.*
- *The Gloria and the acclamations (Holy, Holy; Great Amen, and Lamb of God) again will be sung.*

The choir will return again in the fall, as it is usually in hiatus for the summer months. The music, readings, and Mass parts will continue to be in the bulletin. We will look at the hymnal situation as the new liturgical year approaches.

- ***On June 7, Daily Mass at 8:30 am returns to the chapel.***

I know that there are questions regarding our summer education programs. Since most of our students are unable to be vaccinated, different directives are issued concerning them. The Diocese has sent us instructions to comply with evolving guidance for summer camps and schools. The most recent CDC communication describes “physical distancing recommendations for day camps that align with current evidence for physical distancing in schools, including at least 3 feet of physical distance between campers in the same cohort, except when eating and drinking (at least 6 feet); at least 6 feet of physical distance between campers and staff; and at least 6 feet between campers in different cohorts.” Right now, our staffing cannot accommodate these recommendations. Consequently, as of this publication, Vacation Bible School and Summer PSR are not happening. Should conditions change, we will advise everyone through the parish bulletin, website, and emails.

I think you will see that these protocols for Holy Spirit are hopeful but cautious. Though we are not out of COVID completely we see the light growing brighter. We acknowledge that this time and the limitations placed were challenging for some and they very much want to drop the precautions and go back to “the way it was” and at the same time we acknowledge that there are some who still have concerns and trepidation about public activities. As a parish, we respect both groups and ask that we all respect each other’s views at this time.

Sincerely,

Rev. Charles F. Strebler, Pastor