

Dear Church,

Over the last several weeks, based upon the protocols as established by the State of Massachusetts and the Archdiocese of Boston, Saint Patrick Parish has been making plans for restoring parish life and keeping everyone as safe as possible. We have seen the efforts made nationally and locally to help flatten the curve of this pandemic which seems to be working: physical distancing, good personal hygiene, hand washing, the use of hand sanitizer, and disinfecting commonly used areas and **staying home when not feeling well**. After all, the last thing we would want is to create a resurgence of the pandemic that would require a reversal of our gradual progress.

We take each person's health condition very seriously. Therefore, we will continue moving towards the goal of full parish life with prudence. We will balance the real spiritual needs of the faithful with our great concern for the physical well-being of our parishioners, visitors and staff. As we move forward, we urge you to please keep in mind that progress will be gradual and may at times be imperfect. We ask for everyone's patience. Please remember that the general dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation continues, hence parishioners who are vulnerable because of age or health conditions or just feel safer staying at home during this time are encouraged to do so and make a spiritual communion by watching our Mass on Stoneham Cable TV. Also, during this time attendance at Mass will be limited due to physical distancing, church capacity and other factors so we urge anyone wishing to attend Mass to register online; go to our website stpatrickstoneham.org and click on the Sign Up Genius button. If you cannot register on line you may call the parish office by phone. Registration will begin Monday June 8th after 10:00 am (the week prior to the scheduled masses) and continue each week accordingly.

Daily masses will resume Monday, June 15th at Noon in the upstairs church and will include Adoration, Divine Mercy and the Rosary. Confessions will resume Saturday, June 27th in Our Lady's Hall from 3:00 pm – 3:45 pm. Groups that have utilized parish facilities to meet in the evening will be deferred to September at which time another review will be conducted.

Even with all the precautionary measures taking place, it is important for individuals and families to take personal responsibility to protect themselves and others by adhering to physical distance guidelines and by following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for hand-washing and hand sanitizer as well as the use of face masks while in public. Saint Patrick Parish will continue to have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament each day from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm in the window of Our Lady of Providence Hall facing the small school parking lot.

Let's look forward to a future beyond this pandemic, however until that time lets work together for one another's safety and health. Therefore, these are the protocols established by the State and Archdiocese we need to adopt as we look forward to attending Mass:

- Parishioners must register online through our website or by phone to attend a particular weekend Mass. Registration by phone will be open at 10:00 am Monday through 4:00 pm Thursday each week. You are not considered registered until you receive confirmation from the office. Online registration will be open at 10:00 am Monday through Saturday at 12 pm or until we have reached capacity for the upcoming Sunday Masses.
- **ONLY ONE ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCH WILL BE OPENED.** The building will be opened 30 minutes before Mass begins. The one entrance will be the rear parking lot entrance at the back of the parish center. Social distancing will be required as you enter. You must follow all posted protocols and directions of staff. Do not immediately go to the stairwell or elevator. Please check in at the registration table and provide your registration confirmation. You will be ushered to the ONE stairwell going up to the Church or to the elevator for those with special needs. Parishioners will be seated by the ushers using the main aisle only as the side aisles are designated as exits.
- All members of the congregation need to wear face masks with the exception of children under the age of two and those with special health needs.

- We ask parishioners to bring your own hand sanitizer to use before and after Mass.
- Food and drink are not allowed at Mass. Parents should not bring food or drinks into Mass for their children during this time.
- The priest and those, while in the Sanctuary, will not be wearing a mask (as strict social distancing will be maintained). However, they will wear masks when distributing Holy Communion.
- There will be no social gatherings either before or after Mass. All parishioners must exit as instructed immediately after Mass in a timely manner to allow the teams to disinfect the entire parish facility for the next Mass.
- There will be no processions at the Mass (entrance or offertory); the Priest will enter and exit from the Sacristy and there will be no public access to the Sacristy while the Church is open.
- There will be no Altar Servers, Lectors, or Eucharistic Ministers.
- All Holy Water fonts will remain empty.
- Hymnals, missalettes and bulletins have been removed.
- Congregational singing will not be allowed in these early days; however, as time progresses the organist and the cantor will be with us from the Baptistry.
- There will be no passing of the basket for the Offertory Collection. Instead, there will be two wooden houses as you leave the church after Mass where you can deposit your offertory envelopes. Hence, we urge you to please consider online giving!
- There will be no hand holding for the Our Father.
- There will be no invitation to participate in the sign of peace.

FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

- Only the priest or deacon will distribute Holy Communion at all Masses. The communicants and the Priest will wear a mask.
- Neither the priest nor communicant should wear gloves during the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Parishioners who are not coming forward to receive Holy Communion or a blessing are requested to step out of their pews at the beginning so that no one will have to climb over anyone else.
- Communion should be received in the hand. For those insisting on receiving by tongue, we will require that you wait until Mass is over. We will distribute communion to you at that time.
- Communicants will be invited to come up starting with the first side tribunals on either side of the altar first, then as each tribunal is finished the next tribunal will be invited to receive communion. This will allow for safe distancing in the aisles. The two main tribunals will be invited up one at a time. We will begin with the back rows and work our way forward. Ushers will assist in this process.
- Communicants will receive the consecrated host in their outstretched hands, step to the side, lower their mask, consume the host and return to their pew. There will be place markers to denote the locations.
- In case of unintentional contact, the Priest or Deacon will immediately sanitize his own hands.
- Please return to your pews as directed by the signs on the side aisles.
- After Mass is ended, Parishioners will be invited to leave the Church beginning with the back rows using the side aisles only and directed by the ushers. This will allow for safe social distancing. Only one stairwell and the elevator will be used as an Exit.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this time. We ask for your continued patience and kindness with our volunteers, your parish staff and your clergy. Our Lady of Mount Carmel pray for us!

Please also note that during these phases as established by the State and Archdiocese, the church will be opened weekdays from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm. The parish office will be staffed but will be available by phone only. Please call the office at 781-438-0960 for any parish related business, to book a mass or to obtain a mass cards, etc.