

# *Procedures to Re-Open St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church for Public Masses, as adapted from Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller – May 2020*

As of May 13, 2020, Archbishop Gustavo, Archbishop of San Antonio, has granted us permission to begin the reopening of public Masses starting May 19, 2020. Archbishop Gustavo issued a decree on March 13, 2020 including dispensation for all Catholics from the obligation to participate in Mass on Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation. This dispensation remains in effect under this Decree and will continue until specifically revoked.

The staff of St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church is dedicated to providing parishioners public Mass in a safe environment while following the directives given by the Archdiocese of San Antonio as well as guidelines from the Texas State Health Services Department.

Public Mass resumed on Tuesday, May 19, 2020. Weekend Mass times are as follow: Saturday Vigil Mass is at 5:30pm. Sunday Mass times are 9:00am, 11:00am, 1:00pm (Spanish), and 6:00pm (Life Teen). Daily Masses will be Monday at 6:30pm, Tuesday – Thursday at 8:00am and Friday at 10:00am. Please note that Mass on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, will be at 8:00am, which is the normal time for holiday Masses.

## *Church Seating Arrangements*

Upon entry to the church, you will notice immediately that chairs have been placed in the center of the Sanctuary. This is a temporary arrangement to help maximize seating while we adhere to social distancing. The ambo has also been temporarily moved to the left of the altar. You may also see cameras in the center aisle so we can continue to film Mass for those who cannot attend.

We apologize if this arrangement causes any consternation, especially to those who fully understand the original design of our sacred space and its proper spiritual design and goal. We have chosen a very practical and functional solution to the greatly reduced seating capacity due to social distancing guidelines.

## *Capacity & Seat Reservation*

- For now, the number of persons allowed to enter the church will be limited to that number which can maintain the social distancing guidelines of a minimum of six feet between families.
  - 260 in the church and 175 in the Cana Ballroom.
- Because it is impossible to accommodate all our parishioners for Sunday Masses, we are asking parishioners to reserve their seats online before each weekend. <https://www.stpetersboerne.com/>
- Those who show up without a seat reservation will be placed in a stand-by line and will be seated only if capacity is not met due to “no-shows,” or they will be offered a seat in the Cana Ballroom, space permitting.
- Seat reservation will only apply to Sunday Masses and Saturday Vigil. Daily Masses will be first come, first served until capacity is reached. Sunday Mass reservations will open each Monday morning.

## *Before You Arrive*

- Parishioners and lay ministers should wash their hands for 20 seconds before leaving home.
- Please always bring your own mask and wear it during Mass.
- Masks are not required for children under 10.
- The nursery is closed.
- Parishioners are encouraged to bring their hand sanitizer that can be used before receiving Holy Communion.
- No one should bring items that contain bleach into the sanctuary, as this will damage the pews.

## Mass Arrival Procedures for Parishioners

- Masks should be worn to all Masses.
- Parishioners may arrive 20-30 minutes before Mass begins to stand in line.
- Each parishioner should print or have their reservation confirmation email pulled up on their phone to show staff when entering. This will speed up the process for all.
- The main doors of the church will open one hour before Mass for the Saturday 5:30pm Mass, the 9:00am and 6:00pm Sunday Masses. Doors will open for the 11:00am and 1:00pm Masses as soon as cleaning from the previous Mass is finished.
- The church will be seated to fill the pews by the size of the family. Every other pew will be closed.
- Parishioners that live together may sit together, but six feet distance is required between the households. Parishioners are to sit where instructed by ushers.
- Parishioners are not to stop at the baptismal font to bless themselves. There are plants around the font to block access to it.
- Anyone without a reserved seat will be asked to stand in a stand-by line. If there is extra seating, they will be granted entrance either in the Sanctuary or Cana Ballroom.
- Seats will be given away 15 minutes before Mass starts.
- Entrance into the church must be done in an orderly fashion while maintaining social distancing guidelines. Please follow the instructions of the ushers.

## Mass Procedures

- Masses will be conducted in the same manner as seen on the live stream with reduced volunteer lay ministers. There will be no altar servers, choirs, or lay sacristans.
- There will not be any loose printing materials such as songbooks, missals, etc. Bulletins will be available outside after Mass.
- Lectors and readers will not process in with the priest.
- Everyone must keep face masks on for the duration of Mass.
- There is to be no physical contact between households at the sign of peace or hand-holding during the Lord's Prayer. Greet each other with a wave, a nod of your head or with another respectful gesture.
- Baskets will not be passed during the offertory. An usher will walk in the empty rows so that offerings may be placed in the basket, though we encourage online giving through:  
<https://stpetersboerne.weshareonline.org/ws/opportunities/GeneralOffertoryCollection>

## Ministers of Hospitality (Ushers)

- Ushers must always wear masks and gloves and switch out to new gloves after each Mass. We are requesting ushers bring their own mask and gloves.
- Parish staff or volunteers will be stationed at the entrance of the church, confirming the parishioner has a reservation for the Mass. They can show a printed copy, their cell phone or we also have ticket stubs they can use to enter. Please try to keep the line moving.
- Parish staff or volunteers with counters will be at the entrance into the Sanctuary. They will be keeping count so we know how many stand-by parishioners we can let in.
- Stand-by parishioners may be let in starting 15 minutes before Mass.
- Families can sit together but must be six feet apart from the next family.

## *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)*

- The congregation will stand in both the church and the Cana Ballroom, and the EMHC will take Communion to the parishioners by walking through the empty aisles.
- The six stations in the Sanctuary will be the same, plus we added two in the front of the altar for the priest and the deacon for those seated in the center, though again parishioners will stand and the EMHC will bring Communion to the congregation.
- EMHC must wear masks at all times and distribute in the hand only.
- If a parishioner requests to receive by the tongue, please inform them you have been instructed by the Archbishop, for the safety of all, only to distribute in the hand.
- EMHC will not stand around the altar to receive the paten (ciboria), but rather the EMHC will stand in the line marked with tape to keep social distancing. You will be instructed to come forward to receive your paten (ciboria). For those going to the Cana Ballroom, Debra Martini will escort you to the ballroom.
- There will be six EMHC for the ballroom. Each EMHC will distribute Communion to each person in their assigned row. The parishioners will stand and the EMHC will walk to each person in their row to offer Communion.
- After the Cana Ballroom EMHC offer Communion, they will all return together, led by Debra Martini to the tabernacle where the extra hosts will be combined.

## *Communion Procedures*

- Archbishop Gustavo has instructed that Communion is not offered on the tongue for the protection of our priests, deacons, EMHC and parishioners.
- The Precious Blood will not be offered to the congregation.
- The Communion stations will be the same, plus we added two more in front of the altar for those sitting in the center.
- Parishioners will **not** come forward to receive Communion; instead the EMHC will go to them. Parishioners should stand and wait for the EMHC to go to them.
- Masks should be worn at all times. You may lower your mask as you receive Communion in your hand. After Communion, the mask should be raised immediately.

## *Mass Departure Procedures*

- After the final blessing, parishioners are to remain in their seats for dismissal instructions.
- Pews will be dismissed in an orderly fashion starting in the rear of the church and then moving forward. Exits will be through the main doors and the two side doors by the Holy Family and Our Lady of Guadalupe chapels.
- Private prayer is not available after Sunday Masses to allow the church to be professionally cleaned and disinfected for the next Mass.
- Clergy have been instructed not to be in the narthex before or after Mass for their own protection and that of the parishioners.
- Parishioners are not to congregate outside but head directly to their vehicles to allow the next Mass to start on time.

## *Church and Cana Ballroom Cleaning and Sanitization*

To rebuild trust and confidence about attending public celebration of the Mass, the parish staff has arranged to have our professional cleaning company, Lone Star Cleaning, do the cleaning and sanitization of the Sanctuary, bathrooms, and Cana Ballroom after all Masses. This is being done for your health and protection. They are following all CDC guidelines, including a complete wipe down of all the pews, and the spraying of an approved disinfectant. To clean the church expeditiously and adequately, the church will be locked between Masses.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. This is being done for the common good of maintaining public health. Please rest assured we are doing our best to make your church safe and clean for gathering in worship.

## *When to Return to Mass – A Personal Decision*

Archbishop Gustavo strongly encourages those 65 and over and those who are at-risk or are part of the vulnerable health population to stay at home and participate in Mass via our live stream online. At-risk and vulnerable populations include:

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|-------------------------|--|
| † 65 years old or older | † Liver Disease  |
| † Chronic Lung Disease  | † Weakened Immune System                                     |
| † Heart Disease         | † Pregnant Women   |
| † Diabetes              | † Known to be in close contact with someone who had COVID-19 |
| † Kidney Disease        |  |

Even if you are healthy but experience any of the following symptoms, you should not come to Mass. Please consult with your doctor for further diagnosis if you have any of the following symptoms:

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| † Chronic Cough                               | † Loss of taste or smell   |
| † Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | † Diarrhea   |
| † Chills                                      | † Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit |
| † Repeated shaking with chills                | † Known close contact with a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19                          |
| † Muscle pain                                 |  |
| † Headache                                    |  |
| † Sore throat                                 |  |

**The guiding principle that parishioners should follow in deciding when to first return to public Mass is to be attentive to not only your health but everyone's health and welfare. The bottom line is, only come back when you are ready. The Archbishop has given dispensation for all Catholics from the obligation to participate in Mass on Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation. This dispensation remains in effect under this Decree and will continue until specifically revoked.**