

24 May 2021

Dear Parishioners,

I hope that you are in good health, have gotten your Covid vaccinations and are looking forward to the termination of Covid-19 protocols. I am writing you with the best news we have received in over 14 months. As of June 2nd, the churches of the Diocese of Cleveland and throughout Ohio will be returning to obligatory Mass attendance on weekends and Holy Days of obligation and a sense of normality in celebrating Masses. Can I hear an “Amen”?!

Beginning the weekend of June 5-6 all Catholics in Ohio will need to return to the obligatory practice of attending and participating in weekend and Holy Day Masses. As is the precept (law) of the Church, those excused are the homebound, those who are frail due to illness or age and those, who in good conscience, believe they would be placed in serious health jeopardy for oneself and/or a homebound family member. For those who do not fall into these categories they are obliged to return to Mass in person. Watching Mass on TV or online does not fulfill one’s obligation. You can go to our parish’s website www.stfrancisdesales-church.org to read the letter from the Bishops of Ohio for a more in-depth explanation.

Here in our diocese Bishop Malesic has issued the following guidelines which will take effect on June 2, 2021. The guidelines are as follows.

1. Face masks will no longer be required. Those who have not yet been vaccinated or are otherwise vulnerable are strongly urged to continue to wear their face masks.
2. Social distancing no longer will be required. All pews will be open for seating.
3. Holy Water will be in the fonts at the church doors. The Water will be replaced with the fonts cleaned regularly. ****All church doors will be unlocked for weekend Masses and other special celebrations. Funerals, though, will continue to use the handicap ramp because of the safety and traffic issues when parking on State Road.****
4. Liturgical processions at the beginning and end of Mass, as well as the Offertory procession to present the gifts will resume.
5. The Offertory collection will be taken up by the ushers as it was done before the pandemic (passing the basket from pew to pew).
6. The Sign of Peace will be permitted. However, it should be exchanged without contact between persons who are not of the same household or family.

7. All liturgical ministers can resume their ministries. This includes choirs. ****The plan is for our choirs to resume in the fall since this is the time of the year they normally conclude and recess for the summer.****
8. Holy Communion will be distributed under the one substance of the consecrated hosts. Communion from the cup remains suspended. It is highly recommended that people continue to receive Communion in their hands for the safety of the ones distributing Holy Communion.
9. Hymnals can be used by the people attending the Mass. ****Remember to replace your hymnal in the book racks at the church doors as you leave Mass.****
10. The church will be cleaned under a regular schedule. However, the “deep cleaning” that has taken place after each Mass during the past year will no longer be necessary after each Mass.
11. Hand sanitizer will still be available at the church doors.
12. Visitation to the homebound by priests, deacons and Eucharistic Ministers can resume.

Yes, it has been a long time since we all gathered around the Lord's Table of Word and Sacrament. I truly look forward to seeing all of you again and visiting the homebound. I must say that I am thankful that so many of you continued to be good stewards of treasure and financially supported the parish. God bless you! As we go forward I need to say two things. First, there will be no checking to see if a person without a mask has been vaccinated. It is the honor system. Of course, God will know! However, if you have not been vaccinated, please do so or consider continuing to wear your mask. Second, get back into the “good habit” of coming to Mass weekly. Its going to be hard if you got used to viewing Mass on TV or online at your convenience, but the experience of being physically present for Mass with other people and receiving the gift of Holy Communion is the core of our Catholic faith.

I hope to see everyone at Mass the weekend of June 5-6, which appropriately is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi Sunday).

Sincerely,

Rev. Mark J. Peyton
Pastor