

Regarding the approaching resumption of public Mass at Ascension (and this weekend's plans)

Update posted on June 1, 2020

The next few weeks are going to be busy ones for our parish. We want to keep you updated on activities and at the same time are going to try to keep the emails and messages to a minimum.

Fr. Larry will not be posting daily Mass this week because of all the activity. He plans to post Mass for Sunday and the Old Testament classes on YouTube.

Confessions will be available Saturday afternoon beginning at 3:00 pm. The church will be open Sunday at 8:00 am for private prayer, with outside exposition from noon - 1:00 pm, weather permitting. Everyone in the church, except for Fr. Larry, **MUST WEAR A MASK/FACIAL COVERING FOR THEIR MOUTH AND NOSE**. We know they are uncomfortable and for many of us they cause our breath to fog up our glasses, but it is absolutely essential. If you do not wear a mask, you will not be permitted in the church, chapel or Bates Hall. Wearing a mask helps to keep others safe.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey sent out to all parishioners via Flocknote. We are in the process of reaching out to those who volunteered. Given the current limitations in Prince George's County restricting worship services to no more than 10 people, we are unable to begin public celebration of Mass for the parish this coming weekend as we had hoped. We pray we will have a date soon!

As we prepare for the return of public Mass at Ascension, we have pages of direction from the Archdiocese and guidance from the CDC and others to inform our actions. Each parish will make decisions for their parish. Therefore, there may be a lot of variation between parishes. Here's what we know for Ascension thus far:

- Because of the timing of reopening and the planned construction (which we hope will begin in June) we plan to have Mass in Bates Hall.
- Due to the requirements for cleaning, etc., our Mass schedule will be different for an extended period of time.
- If we are able to use the restrooms, they may only be used in an extreme emergency and must be thoroughly sanitized after each person.
- For the immediate future, we will not have altar servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion or music at Masses.
- There will be no gathering before or after Mass, no coffee and donuts and no other events.
- During the liturgy, no holding hands or sign of peace.

In preparation for returning to Mass, see below for instructions regarding the reception of Holy Communion to be followed when public Mass returns. Again, there is no guarantee adhering to these will prevent anyone from contracting the virus; however, it will help reduce the risk.

It is important to remember, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation remains in place for the foreseeable future. As such, you are not obligated to attend Mass. Please do not come to Mass or visit the church or chapel if you are sick or anyone else in your household or family is ill. If you are over the age of sixty, have heart or lung conditions, diabetes, or other medical conditions such as being immuno-compromised, we urge you to stay home. We know the pain of not being present in community, not being able to participate in the Mass and not being able to receive our Lord in

the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lord knows our pain and our longing. Yet, in the present situation it is best to stay at home.

More important announcements regarding Mass and other parish news will be released soon. If you know of any parishioners who have not signed up for FlockNote with their email address, please encourage them to do so.

Process for Reception of Holy Communion at Ascension Catholic Church

When public Masses resume, Mass will be celebrated in Bates Hall. Everyone will need to adhere to the following regarding reception of Holy Communion:

- Face coverings **MUST** be worn by everyone except the celebrant. Fr. Larry will wear a mask during the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Everyone is expected to sanitize their hands upon entering the church or hall.
- Fr. Larry must make several announcements at each Mass prior to distribution of Holy Communion regarding the process.
- There will be one line in the aisle for reception of Holy Communion, as only priests and deacons are permitted to distribute at this time. Those in line must be 6 feet from each other and people in the pews.
- At this time, only those who are prepared (in a state of grace) and able to receive Holy Communion are to be in line. There will be no blessings of those in line, only distribution of Holy Communion. Children old enough to remain in their seats should do so.
- When you approach for reception of the Host, **DO NOT REMOVE YOUR MASK.**
 - o Everyone who receives will receive in the hand
 - o Place one hand under the other while keeping your fingers together, making “a throne for the King” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).
 - o Fr. Larry will say “The Body of Christ”, with your MASK ON, you will respond “Amen”
 - o Fr. Larry will place the host in your hand
 - o You will immediately move 6 feet to your right or left (there will be an ‘x’ on the floor), remove one side of your mask, place the Host in your mouth and immediately replace your mask. Once your mask is in place, turn and follow the arrows on the floor to return to your seat.
- If Fr. Larry accidentally touches your hands, he will place the ciborium on a table next to him, clean his hands, then resume distribution.