

St. Mary's Catholic Church – Re-opening for Masses Information Sheet

INFORMATION ABOUT RETURNING TO CHURCH DURING PHASE ONE

God is good!

Bishop Knestout has instructed parishes to reopen for limited celebrations of the Eucharist beginning on the weekend of May 23-24.

We are a “Pro-Life” Church, so we always seek to protect the health and safety of every human being. As we resume the celebration of public liturgies, we will all have to adjust to a number of adaptations which are designed to protect the well-being of every parishioner. Thank you in advance for your patience!

IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH CROWD LIMITATIONS, WE MUST ASK ALL PARISHIONERS TO PRE-REGISTER FOR EACH MASS THAT THEY WISH TO ATTEND. Those who do not pre-register for a specific Mass cannot be admitted to our buildings.

Please read the following information with care, then follow the directions for pre-registering for a weekend or weekday Mass.

+ WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU PRE-REGISTER FOR MASS

We are concerned for the well-being of each member of our community. If you are in a ‘vulnerable category’ for the COVID-19 virus (e.g. adults 65 and older, people with compromised immune systems, etc) we strongly encourage you to stay home at this time.

All Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays & Holy Days.

The parish will continue to provide video versions of Mass through our daily emails.

At this time, there will be no nursery or children’s Liturgy of the Word. Parishioners will not be able to socialize in the Commons, nor will there be any seating in the Commons during Mass.

Everyone age 10 and up must provide their own facemask and wear it while they are in our buildings. Those who arrive without a facemask cannot be admitted to the building.

It is always wise to bring your own hand sanitizer. If you have extra sanitizer, the parish would be happy to receive donations!

+ WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE FOR A MASS FOR WHICH YOU'VE PRE-REGISTERED:

Everyone age 10 and up must bring their own face mask and wear it while in the building.

Everyone will enter through the main front doors of the church. If a member of the family is parking the car, everyone will be asked to wait outside and go through screening as a household.

At all times, social distancing norms must be followed. Chalk marks & floor tape will help you to maintain a distance of 6 feet from people not in your household.

Before you enter the building, you will stand in line outside and will be asked three screening questions. They are:

1. Have you or anyone in your household had a fever in the last 2 weeks?
2. Do you or anyone in your household have a new cough or new shortness of breath?
3. Have you come into contact with anyone who is positive for COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks?

If you or any member of your household answers 'yes' to any of these questions, or if any member of your household age 10 and up does not have a face mask, we cannot allow you to enter the building.

Once you have answered these screening questions, members of the staff will check the registration list to confirm that you have pre-registered for this specific Mass. If you did not pre-register for this specific Mass, we cannot let you enter the building. You will be given printed information about how to pre-register for future Masses.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THOSE WHO ARRIVE AFTER THE START OF MASS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENTER THE BUILDING – you must arrive early to be screened and seated. The doors will open 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass. Once Mass begins, the doors will be locked. We regret that we cannot make exceptions to this rule.

+ WHAT TO EXPECT ONCE YOU HAVE ENTERED THE BUILDING

We ask you to maintain a 6 foot separation from those not in your household.

Staff members will direct you to available seats in the Church. We must maintain a 6 foot separation between those who are not of the same household. PLEASE NOTE – you will be ASSIGNED a place to sit. It may not be possible for you to sit in your 'favorite seat.'

Based on social distancing requirements, a maximum of 250 people will be able to register for each Mass.

Everyone will be required to wear their masks during the liturgy, except for the brief moment when they remove their mask to consume the Holy Eucharist. We will not hold hands for the Lord's Prayer or shake hands at the Sign of Peace. We will not sing in the way that we have been accustomed to do so. There will be specific instructions given about the reception of Holy Communion. In the strongest possible way, we ask all parishioners to receive Communion in the hand during this time. Those who may have a question about receiving Communion on the tongue must speak with the priest prior to Mass. The chalice will not be distributed at this time.

You will note a number of other changes in the liturgy. The Baptismal font is empty. There will be no processions at the beginning or end of Mass. There will be no printed liturgy program and no printed bulletin to take home. The bulletin continues to be available on the parish web page.

At the end of Mass, the pastor will dismiss the congregation row by row. We will not be able to accommodate any socializing in the Commons. Parishioners may drop their collection envelopes in baskets which will be located in the Commons as you depart.

We suggest that you use the restroom at home prior to driving to church. While our restrooms will be available during Mass, we must limit the total number of people in the rest room at any one time. Professional janitorial employees will continuously clean the rest rooms. Professionals will also clean the church after each Mass.

+ THE TIME SCHEDULE FOR MASS HAS CHANGED

In order to follow all diocesan guidelines, we must adjust our Mass times as follows:

Saturday – Confessions from 3:30 – 4:30 PM. If you pre-register to attend the Saturday evening Mass, you must go back outside after Confession and participate in the screening process.

Saturday – Mass at 5:30

Sunday – Masses at 8:30 and 11:30 AM

Daily Mass – Tuesday through Friday at 9:30

Please note that you must pre-register for each and every Mass you want to attend, including daily Masses. The screening and seating process will be identical on weekends and weekdays.