

GUIDELINES FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

“That in this sacrament are the true Body of Christ and his true Blood is something that cannot be apprehended by the senses but only by faith, which relies on divine authority.”

-Saint Thomas Aquinas

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

“As Catholics, we maintain that Christian worship and sacraments are just as necessary for the human person – indeed, far more necessary – as many commercial activities now permitted. This is particularly true in a time of widespread anxiety and potentially grave sickness. According to public health authorities, it is possible to provide the Mass and the sacraments to the faithful in this period. The following is based on current guidance issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other public health authorities.”¹

A dispensation from the obligation to participate in Sunday Mass remains in effect for all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Miami. Furthermore, the elderly, anyone who is sick, those with underlying health conditions, and those caring for the elderly or infirmed should not attend Mass in person, but rather join via livestream (or even a televised Mass).

The temporary schedule for Masses and Livestreaming are posted on our web page.

The Church teaches us that Christ is fully present in both the sacred host and the precious blood. Therefore, someone who receives Holy Communion under only one species receives the whole Christ. “Since Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1390).

HOW THE CORONAVIRUS SPREADS

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (April 22, 2020), “[t]he virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. The spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).” The CDC adds: “Currently, there is no evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 associated with food...In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging.”

GUIDELINES FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

PRECAUTIONS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER MASS

PARISH FACILITIES

The church and parish hall are being cleaned during the week. Between Masses, these facilities are being disinfected.

The doors to the Church and the parish Hall are designated as “Entrance Only” or “Exit Only”. Ushers will be available to open the doors to greet the faithful when they arrive, and they will open the doors for exiting.

Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available at the entrance of the Church and parish Hall.

MASKS

All the faithful participating in Mass are to wear masks. Masks should be worn before, during and after Mass. Masks are to be removed in order to receive of Holy Communion. The priest, deacon and other liturgical ministers will not wear masks during Mass because they will maintain the required social distancing from one another and the congregation. Hence, there is no substantial risk of infection. (“The Mass is imbued with powerful sacramental and liturgical symbolism. Wearing a mask and gloves would be a detrimental counter-sign in this context, and it is not warranted by considerations of hygiene if the priest remains a proper distance from the congregation” (Guidelines on Sacraments and Pastoral Care, p. 6).

All who distribute Holy Communion will wear masks.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Everyone is encouraged to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet while on the church property (in the parking lot, in the church or social hall, when using the restroom, when greeting fellow parishioners before or after Mass, etc.).

Ushers will help seat the faithful to keep social distancing. Please follow their guidance.

Members of a single household do not need to practice physical distancing with each other and so may sit together in the same row – those who live together may sit together.

At Masses, when a safe capacity has been reached in the Church, it will be closed and the faithful will be directed to the parish hall where the Mass will be transmitted via livestreaming. If a safe capacity is reached in the parish hall, it also will be closed.

Social distancing should be maintained during the procession to receive Holy Communion. Markings on the floor will show six-foot intervals.

GUIDELINES FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

LITURGICAL ADAPTATIONS AT THE HOLY MASS:

SUSPENDED LITURGICAL ACTIONS

The following liturgical actions are suspended:

- ◇ The use and availability of holy water.
- ◇ The offertory procession (bringing the gifts of bread and wine to the altar).
- ◇ The holding of hands during the praying of the Lord's Prayer.
- ◇ The exchange of the sign of peace.
- ◇ The distribution of the Precious Blood at Holy Communion.

MUSIC AND MISSALETTES

Music will be led by a cantor or a small schola, but not full a choir. Missalettes and hymnals have been removed from the pews.

COLLECTION

The collection baskets will not pass from parishioner to parishioner. Rather, we will have collection baskets at the entrances and/or exits of the church. Please place your offering in the baskets as you arrive or leave.

THE DISTRIBUTION AND RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

The sacred character of the Holy Eucharist can never be compromised. Our actions during the Holy Mass must always reflect our firm belief in and our reverence for the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, even as we take prudent measures for public health. Therefore:

- ◇ The procession for receiving Holy Communion is to be a single line, maintaining social distancing.
- ◇ Only the Consecrated Host will be distributed at the time of Holy Communion.
- ◇ Those distributing Holy Communion will wear masks but not gloves.
- ◇ In the interest of their own health and that of fellow parishioners, the faithful are strongly encouraged to receive Holy Communion in the hand, even if this is not their usual preference.
- ◇ Communicants are to remove any face coverings before coming forward for Holy Communion
- ◇ Holy Communion may not be received in the hand if the communicant is wearing gloves.

DISMISSAL

In order to maintain a safe social distance, the faithful will leave the church one pew at a time and using the "Exit Only" doors. The ushers will offer guidance.