

Returning to Mass Protocols St. Mary's & St. Michael's

As we look to reopen St. Mary's and St. Michael's to the faithful, we are making every effort to minimize risk to all our parishioners. We are using best practices put forth by the CDC and Archbishop Hebda. The following protocols will guide our return to Mass at the Churches of St. Mary and St. Michael:

Should I Stay Or Should I Go?

- While we desire to be together and worship with our entire parish family, our first consideration must continue to be for the spiritual and physical health of our parishioners and those whom they encounter. We continue to rely on medical professionals and governmental standards to inform these directives.
- Please stay at home if you (or someone you live with) are experiencing flu-like symptoms. If you are considered "high risk," please consider staying home and participating in our online Masses through this duration of Phase II.
- The maximum number of persons admitted into our building is limited to 25% of the total seating capacity. (85 persons at St. Mary's / 135 at St. Michael's). Each person must remain 6 feet away in all directions from others not in the same household. Ushers will help us maintain a safe number of parishioners gathered at each Mass. Once our maximum number of attendees is reached, ushers will have to turn people away and encourage parishioners to attend a different Mass or participate virtually off-site.
- The Obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation continues to be suspended as long as the pandemic continues.
 - St. Michael's and St. Mary's will continue to live-stream liturgies for the benefit of the homebound and those otherwise vulnerable and unable to attend in person.
 - The primacy of Sunday is to be respected, even for those unable to attend in person. If social distancing restrictions make attending Sunday Mass impossible or inadvisable, please consider instead attending Mass on a weekday with smaller crowds.

Preparing for Mass

- The faithful should wear cloth face coverings before, during, and after Mass. (Note special instructions for receiving Communion below).
 - Surgical masks or N-95 respirators are not recommended.

- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Please consider bringing hand sanitizer to use before Mass and before receiving Holy Communion.
- We recommend parishioners use the restroom at home before coming to church.
- Please refrain from gathering on church grounds before or after Mass.

What to Expect at Mass:

- Father Izen and Father Powers will serve as the only Ministers of Holy Communion. No altar servers, lectors, or sacristans will be assisting with liturgies at this time.
 - Our priests, ushers, and all assisting with the liturgy will wear face masks, use hand sanitizer, and observe other good hygienic practices before and after Mass.
- Congregational singing is to be temporarily discontinued; our cantor and organist will offer music on behalf of the congregation. Hymnals have been temporarily removed.
- Water fonts will remain empty; the Sign of Peace, holding hands during the Lord's Prayer, and other physical greetings remain suspended.
- Pews, doorknobs, restrooms and other high-use areas will be sanitized after each liturgy and other regular intervals.
- Doors will be propped open to minimize touch and to maximize air circulation. Ushers at the doors will help promote social distancing as parishioners enter.
- Bulletins remain available online
- The faithful can drop offerings into a basket on the way out of church if they like. Online donations are also encouraged.

Distribution of Holy Communion:

- Communion will be distributed after Mass. The side closest to the door (Sacred Heart at St. Mary's / St. Joseph at St. Michael's) will first move single file down the center aisle to receive. Please maintain 6 feet away from others during the communion procession.

- The Archbishop recommends receiving on the hand, but wearing gloves when receiving Communion in the hand, or receiving it in a paper tissue, plate, cup, or other disposable item is unbecoming of the Blessed Sacrament and is not to be done.
- The priest will hold up the host and (through the face mask) say, “The Body of Christ.” Communicants will reply, “Amen,” and remove their face mask to receive Communion.
 - Our priest(s) will apply hand sanitizer before distributing Communion (and as needed between Communicants).
- After receiving, we encourage communicants to depart immediately to limit additional movement through the church. Please be mindful of exiting with adequate space between yourself and others.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful is still suspended.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we make every effort to minimize risk to all parishioners, especially those who are most vulnerable. This will require that each of us continue to be diligent in good hygiene, social distancing and these guidelines. We appreciate your willingness to adhere to these guidelines and subsequent revisions as we find practices that best suit our evolving parish needs.