

DIRECTIVES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC LITURGIES ~ MAY 2020

These decisions have been weighed very carefully and take into consideration how to best preserve and respect the powerful liturgical and sacramental symbolism of the rites of the Mass while adhering to restrictions issued by the State of Ohio. These directives/guidelines are currently in effect for the Youngstown diocese by order of Bishop Murry and will be revised or changed should any further directives be issued by the Governor of Ohio, or the Council of Bishops of Ohio. Each parish has been given permission to adjust guidelines to better suit their church sites and individual parishioner base. The guidelines issued by the Bishop and the State on how best to proceed was discussed and the following was agreed on by St. Mary/St. Benedict Pastoral council. *The following directives are considered to be temporary until it is determined safe to return to the "normal" celebration of the liturgies.*

DISPENSATION FROM THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND SUNDAY MASS:

The Catholic faithful, especially those who are sick, or at high risk of becoming sick plus their caregivers continue to be dispensed from their Sunday obligation. Everyone is encouraged to continue to maintain spiritual connection through live-stream Masses and the various other media resources. Of course, everyone is strongly encouraged to maintain and increase their personal prayer life.

TEMPORARY ALTERATIONS TO CELEBRATIONS OF PUBLIC LITURGIES:

1. Maximum occupancy will be at 50% capacity. Seating will be staggered, alternating pews. (Of course, spouses and families remain together.)
2. At each site, we are going to use the parking lot set of doors as our single entry and exit point.
3. All in attendance should wash their hands before and after Mass being mindful not to touch their face, eyes, or nose.
4. Sanitizer stations will be made available at entrances.
5. Every effort to ensure appropriate physical distancing before, during, and after Mass is required. (i.e. no gathering in foyers, hallways, social hall, parking lot, bathrooms, etc.)
6. Enclosed spaces for families with small children (cry-rooms) will not be available.
7. While not mandatory, *those attending Mass are urged to wear masks or face coverings.*
8. Entrance and exit processions of Priest and ministers will be suspended. As will the Presentation of Gifts and the Offertory Collection. We will have stationary baskets at the entrance of the church for individual to place their collection envelopes. (Of course, you always have the option of mailing your offertory.)
9. Holy water fonts are to remain empty and Hymnals/Missellettes have been removed and stored.
10. There will be no Lectors, Altar servers or Choirs. Cantors & Pianists/Organists will be able to provide music.
11. We will have bulletins and other materials passed out by hospitality ministers (ushers).
12. No Physical contact during the Lord's Prayer and the Sign of Peace. For the Sign of Peace we encouraged a bow to others while offering words of peace. During the Lord's prayer it would be permissible to slightly raise open hands. They can be held in front or on one's side. (Of course, folding one's hands in front is a traditional sign of reverence)

RECEPTION OF COMMUNION:

1. Distribution will facilitate orderly movement and maintain proper physical distance—one-way traffic patterns and appropriate spacing between individuals is to be maintained. (Directions will be given.)
2. There will be no reception of the Precious Blood from the chalice by the assembly. It is highly encouraged and strongly recommended that the reception of Holy Communion be given in the hand. While reception of Holy Communion on the tongue cannot be prohibited it is discouraged. Those desiring to receive on the tongue are encouraged to be last in line. Once in front of the minister, communicants with masks are to pull them below their chin. After responding "Amen," and reverently placing the Eucharist in the mouth, replace mask. In the unfortunate circumstance that the priest's fingers come in contact with the mouth and/or saliva of the communicant he *must immediately* sanitize his fingers/hands before continuing with the next person in line.
3. Holy Communion is not to be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand with gloves.

If you have questions or concerns you are free to contact Deacon Randy Smith or the Youngstown diocesan offices at any time.