

Dear St. Patrick's Parish Family,

Like yourselves, I'm so happy to be able to say: WE ARE RESUMING PUBLIC MASSES AT ST. PATRICK'S ~ BAY SHORE!

Public Daily Masses have already begun, and Public Sunday Mass will resume this coming weekend, June 13 and 14. It is a most fitting weekend, as this Sunday is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ ~ Corpus Christi! Adding to our joy at being reunited in-person at our Holy Altar, is the recent welcome news that we can resume distribution of Holy Communion as well.

Here are the details, and please read them carefully...I apologize that they are so lengthy and detailed but I believe these practices will keep everyone safe.

1. We are phasing things in slowly, step by step, **SO OUR SCHEDULE AND PRACTICES WILL NOT YET BE EXACTLY AS THEY WERE BEFORE.** Please be patient with us and understand that we need to do things carefully and correctly. As I wrote to you on May 23rd: **"as we return to worship we must implement many procedures to ensure the health and safety of all, especially those most at risk."**

It will not be "back to normal all at once." There will be limitations and restrictions. It might be in stages where some things can happen but others not yet. We will have to take direction from directives issued by the bishop, and we will implement them here at St. Patrick's as applicable to our particular situation. **There will be rules to follow when coming back.** Because each parish has its own unique set of circumstances, what St. Patrick's does might be a little different in some ways from what other parishes do, and those other parishes might be different from each other. A one size fits all approach will not work. **I ask for your continued patience, understanding and spirit of generous cooperation.**

2. Bishop Barres is still granting a dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, which is in effect indefinitely. Those at higher risk from COVID-19 (i.e. the elderly or those who have underlying health conditions) are encouraged to stay home. If you feel you are unable to return to Mass just yet because you are in a high risk category and have health concerns, it is not a sin to miss Mass. Please stay safe!

3. IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY HOME. IF YOU HAVE A FEVER, STAY HOME. IF YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED OR THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO CORONAVIRUS, STAY HOME.

4. For the time being, for those still unable to attend Mass in person, we will continue to Livestream the Mass. **The Mass will be Live Streamed at both 11:00 (English) and 12:00 (Spanish).** Additionally, we are looking at continuing to Live Stream every Sunday going forward. That project is in the planning stages so please be patient while we work it out.

5. **Masses will be celebrated starting this weekend as follows:**

Saturday, June 13th: 5:00 PM (English) and 7:00 PM (Spanish)

Sunday, June 14th: 7:00 AM; 8:00 AM; 9:30 AM; 11:00 AM; 12:00 PM (Spanish) and 5:30 PM.

6. We are currently permitted to gather with only 25 per cent of our building capacity in attendance. **Therefore ALL SUNDAY MASSES WILL BE IN MSGR PURICK HALL since this gives greater capacity at the 25% ratio AND the SIX FOOT DISTANCING REGULATION.** This means that attendance will be limited to approximately 150 people at each Mass. As the rules change in the weeks ahead to permit higher attendance, we will do the same, but for now this is our limit.

7. Attendees will be admitted into the Hall **ONLY at the St Patrick Plaza entrance and the Handicapped Entrance**, one person or one family at a time, starting approximately 15 minutes before Mass starts, or sooner if possible. **Please DO NOT attempt to enter through the 5th Avenue doors.** These will be for egress only.

8. **FACE MASK OR COVERING MUST BE WORN BY EVERYONE!** **NOTE:** Masks or facial coverings should **not** be worn by children under two years of age or by anyone with breathing difficulties. This should be widely understood so as to prevent conflicts between parishioners. Any homemade mask or scarf is sufficient, provided that it covers the nose and mouth.

9. The Celebration of Eucharist will take place in much the same fashion as before, **BUT** with some practices that are different for the foreseeable future.

- Until further notice there will be no entrance processions or recessions through the congregation so as to avoid close contact with numerous people. The route taken will be the shortest possible from the sacristy.
- The number of ministers serving in the sanctuary will be greatly limited, especially at the beginning of reopening. For the time being the Ministries of: Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist (EM's), Altar Servers, Choirs, Cantors, and Ushers **will not** resume.
- All missalettes and hymnals have been removed and printed copies of the Sunday Bulletin will not be available just yet. The Bulletin continues to be available online.
- Holy Water fonts will remain empty. However, the Holy Water tank in the Church vestibule is available for people to take Holy Water home with them.

- Collection baskets will not be passed around. There will be a Large Collection Basket available at the foot of the Sanctuary where you can place your regular Sunday Offering.
- The priest celebrant will **not** wear a mask or gloves during the celebration of Mass. Instead, we will remain more than 6 feet from the congregation during the entirety of the Mass. In such circumstances, there is no substantial risk of infection.
- The offertory procession (bringing up the gifts) will be omitted until further notice.
- The exchange of The Sign of Peace continues to be omitted entirely.

10. In order to reflect both the Church's great reverence for the Eucharist, while also providing appropriate precautions against infection, Bishop Barres has decided that **Holy Communion in the Diocese of Rockville Centre will be distributed after Mass has ended.**

This method has a number of advantages:

- ~ It more easily allows those who have reservations about receiving Holy Communion at this time to refrain and to leave the Church.
- ~ It allows for the priest / deacons / extraordinary ministers to wear a mask during the distribution while preserving the principle that the priest would never be masked during Mass.
- ~ Mass followed by the distribution of Holy Communion, following the safety protocols outlined below, holds in balance the dignity of our worship, the liturgical laws of our Church, and reasonable safety precautions.

11. So, **HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS:**

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest will explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion may do so after the conclusion of the Mass. He will remind you to maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as you come forward for Holy Communion.
- **The Precious Blood** will **not** be distributed for the time being.
- The priest (and, if present, the deacon) will consume the Eucharist in the normal way, but will not immediately proceed to distribute Communion to the faithful. Rather, the newly-consecrated hosts will be briefly placed in the tabernacle awaiting the conclusion of the Mass.
- After the concluding blessing and the dismissal, the priest (and deacon, if present) remain in the sanctuary. At the chair, the priest removes his chasuble and the deacon removes his dalmatic.
- A small sanitizing station will be placed at each communion station, for the priest and deacon.
- At this point the priest will also put on a surgical mask or cloth face covering because we will now be in closer proximity to all of you.
- Now vested in alb and stole, the priest retrieves the newly-consecrated hosts from the tabernacle and returns to the altar.

- Holding up a single host, he says: *“Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”* He then leads the people in saying: *“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”*
- The priest and deacon proceed to the places prepared for distribution of Communion.
- The faithful should remove any face coverings immediately before receiving Holy Communion.
- Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the faithful is wearing gloves.
- The faithful receive Holy Communion in the normal way. From either side of the center aisle you will be invited to come forward to the Communion Station. It is essential that you keep the 6 Foot Distancing rule from the person immediately in front of you.
- **This is a good time to be reminded that when you receive in the hand, PLEASE place one hand on top of the other ~ flat out ~ do not "cup" your hands... nor should you attempt to "grasp" the Host from the ministers hands.**
- St. Cyril of Jerusalem (not Cyril of Bay Shore) wrote: "make your left hand a throne for your right hand, since the latter is to receive the King of Heaven."
- Please pay strict attention to the above... If the minister of Communion senses that his fingers have made contact with a person's hands or mouth, he will have to pause, place the ciborium on the corporal, use the ablution cup and then use hand sanitizer before he can continue. He may repeat this process as often as he judges necessary during the distribution of Holy Communion. It is not necessary, however, for him to use hand sanitizer between each communicant, unless he makes actual contact
- The faithful may depart after making a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

Please note these other important items.

1. Surfaces in both the Church and Purick Hall will be sanitized between Masses when possible, and the entire Church and Purick Hall will be sanitized every evening after closing.

2. Since we are starting slow and phasing things in, no devotions, no novenas, and no Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will be taking place just yet. We will make decisions about phasing those in on a week to week basis.

3. Confessions will begin this coming Wednesday ~ June 17th at 11:30 AM. There will be a separate update issued re: HOW and WHERE confessions will take place.

4. Rectory Hours: As per Diocesan Guidelines ~ the Rectory is currently closed for walk-ins BUT the phones will now be open on MONDAY-WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-12:00pm 631-665-4911

Information can always be found on our website, or by calling the Parish Office during the hours mentioned just above. As we emerge from our days of shutdown and isolation, let us do so with hearts filled with joy and gratitude to Almighty God. Let us see what the coming weeks bring. I thank you for your prayers and your continued support of St. Patrick's. I will continue to be in touch and we will do our best to communicate as best we can. You can do your part by spreading the word to make sure that everyone has the most current, and the most accurate information.

On behalf of Fr. Jack, Fr. Cyril, Fr. Roger, Deacon Frank, Deacon Joe, and Deacon Greg, we really look forward to "welcoming you home" this weekend!

Fr Sean

