

General Guidelines for the Resumption of Public Masses

Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

May 2020

As we prepare to resume celebrating Mass and other sacraments with our parishioners, some alterations to the usual details of the liturgy will have to be put in place in order to maintain required social distancing between those gathered in the church, and to minimize the risk of passing the virus from one to another.

It is important to remember that these guidelines are the framework which allow us to gather again for Mass. They are the best guidelines we have at this point in time, and as a parish, we will do our best to respect them - even if they may cause some inconvenience for us. We will constantly be looking for ways to implement these guidelines in the way which works best for St. Theresa.

Thank you for your patience and understanding!

1. Dispensation of the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday will continue, since it will not be possible for everyone to attend on Sundays.
2. If a person is sick, has a persistent (new) cough, or is vulnerable to infection; or if they live with or care for someone who is vulnerable, they should stay home.
3. Since seating will be limited, pews will be marked to ensure the required social distancing as best suits the layout of the church. If the available seats are filled when you arrive at St. Theresa, please come back to Mass at another time.
4. All hymnals, missalettes, envelopes, and other loose items will be removed from the pews.
5. Families living in the same home may sit together in the same pews without observing distancing between family members.
6. All parishioners attending Mass or other liturgical functions should wear protective face masks.
7. There will be no public reciting of the Rosary before any of our Masses.
8. While liturgical music is always to be encouraged, we will not be singing hymns at any of our Masses.

9. We will not be using Readers, altar servers, or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at any of our Masses.
10. Collection baskets will be placed at the back of the Church in convenient and visible spots. Baskets will not be passed around.
11. Priests will celebrate the Mass using the prayers and the readings designated for the day the Mass is being celebrated. There is no need to transfer the celebration of Sunday Masses to the weekdays.
12. The presiding priest should vest normally, using a mask only for the distribution of Communion.
13. The hosts and wine for Mass will be placed before Mass on the credence table. There should be no procession of the gifts at Offertory in order to limit contact.
14. The invitation to extend a Sign of Peace will be omitted as per rubrics in the *Roman Missal*.
15. The Precious Blood will not be distributed to the lay faithful for the duration of this emergency.
16. Social distancing should be observed in the communion procession. Alternately, in some settings, the priest may instead bring Communion to the people who will remain in their pews.
17. Since assemblies at most parishes will be limited in size, distribution of Communion will be restricted to priests.
18. After communicating, the priest will cleanse their hands with disinfectant and don masks for the distribution of Holy Communion. After Communion, they will remove masks and cleanse their hands again. Medical specialists have advised that there is little benefit from the priest wearing gloves.
19. Communicants are urged to receive the Host in their hands as an act of charitable consideration for the health of their fellow parishioners
20. Social distancing should be observed as the faithful leave the church.
21. These same general guidelines and crowd restrictions would also apply to weddings and funerals.