

May 14, 2021
Return to Public Mass

Dear Parish Family,

We were informed by the Diocese today that the Bishop is studying the Executive Order regarding new State public health recommendations about masks and he will interpret it by May 19th. As soon as we hear, we will let you know.

Earlier in the week Bishop Caggiano, along with the other Bishops of Connecticut restored the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday and Holy Days, beginning May 23, which is Pentecost.

As Catholics, we remember that the Lord has asked us to observe the Sabbath by receiving the Holy Eucharist. While some of us find other ways to nourish the soul - whether by reading Scripture or streaming - it is the True Presence at the Mass and sharing together with everyone in prayer that has defined our faith.

As we encourage you to come back, the Church teaches - and has always taught - that the obligation to go to Mass in person *is not an obligation if you feel you are at risk* (Canon Law 2181). So I want you to know that if going to public Mass compromises you either physically or mentally – you don't have to come. If you feel unsafe, please reach out to me.

Please know going forward, we're excited and encouraged to come to this point of bringing everybody back, but we will do this cautiously and carefully, beginning May 23:

MASKS

- We will continue to require mask-wearing in the Church. When you are in the parking lot outside, you do not need to wear a mask.

LIVE STREAMING

- We will continue to live stream Mass: Saturday at 4pm; Sunday at 10:30am; Mon-Fri: 12:10pm, and special events. We are doing this because we are called to reach all people - those at risk, the homebound, people who are out of the area for work, grandparents and relatives who want to share in the joy of First Communion and Confirmations but do not live nearby.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Since the State of CT Guidelines have changed, with more things opening up, we will open the main body of the church, but *will continue to provide social distancing in the two wings of the church (the choir-side and candle-side) for those who want to honor social distancing.*
- We will have signs up to help guide you, and the ushers will be available as well to guide you.
- If you want to sit in the wings of the church, I encourage you to park in the back of the church for easy access.

SANITIZING CHURCH

- In an abundance of caution, we are going to continue to sanitize the church just as we have always done, in between every Mass on the weekends and after Daily Mass and events.
- All windows will remain open. The Church bathrooms will be opened and sanitized.

SINGING & HYMNALS

- Singing by the congregation will return, with your masks on (but please sing, do not shout)!

- We have ordered more new hymnals to be placed in the pews for those of you who do not have your own.

RECEPTION OF COMMUNION

- We will return to two Communion lines in the Center aisle.
- There is no distribution of the Precious Blood.
- Lay Ministers will direct those who want to receive Communion on the tongue to the priests, who have isopropyl alcohol (at the steps of the altar) to sanitize their hands.

CONFESSIONS

- The priests and I do not feel comfortable opening the Confessionals due to the lack of ventilation, so we will continue to use the Family Cry Room for Confessions.

Finally, please know that all procedures and practices are being done with the intention of safety, while bringing people a rich experience with the Sacraments. As we move forward, let's remember to pray for all who are unable to be with us, and let's pray for each other. If you haven't yet watched Bishop Caggiano's video on return to public Mass, you can find it [HERE](#) and you can read about it [HERE](#).

See you at Mass....

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Jeff