

A PRIEST'S GUIDE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING



WEAR A MASK



SOCIAL DISTANCING



NO PHYSICAL CONTACT

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A PRIEST'S GUIDE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING

PART ONE

Bullet points of the essential details

- Tuesday, May 5: Bishop Fabre will host live Zoom meetings regarding the celebration of Mass with social distancing.
 1. 10:00 am North Lafourche deanery
 2. 1:00 pm South Lafourche deanery
 3. 3:00 pm Terrebonne deanery

Fr. Patrick Riviere will email you the link to access the Zoom meeting
- Saturday, May 9: Bishop Fabre will allow Masses outdoors in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux. Specific guidelines must be followed.
- Monday, May 11: It is expected, but not guaranteed, that Louisiana Governor John Bell Edwards will announce that the public celebration of Mass, with some restrictions, will be allowed.
- Saturday, May 16: It is expected, but not guaranteed, that Bishop Fabre will allow the public celebration of Mass, with some restrictions.

A PRIEST'S GUIDE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING

PART TWO

Guidelines for the celebration of Mass outdoors with social distancing



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SOCIAL DISTANCING



NO PHYSICAL CONTACT

WHEN AND WHERE CAN WE CELEBRATE MASS OUTDOORS?

- On May 1, 2020, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards outlined strict prescriptions authorizing the public celebration of worship services outdoors.
- On May 4, 2020 Bishop Fabre decreed that as of May 9, 2020, the public celebration of Mass may take place outdoors at the discretion of the pastor. Mass outdoors is not required, but allowed. Pastors have the discretion to make the decision to do so or not.
- An outdoor Mass should occur in a large open area, such as a large field or parking lot.
- Mass must not be celebrated in outdoor enclosed areas.

WHAT ABOUT THE WEEKEND OBLIGATION?

- Until further notice, all Catholics in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux remain dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass.
- Therefore, the lay faithful do not have to attend Mass if they are unable or feel unsafe in doing so. They may observe the Lord's Day by praying together as a family, by watching a Mass via livestream, or by doing some other act of devotion.

COMMUNICATION BEFOREHAND

- Communication is essential. Pastors should invest time in a comprehensive communications campaign informing parishioners if and when Mass will be celebrated the weekend of May 9-10.
- Communication could include, but is not limited to:
 1. Email to every email address in Parish Soft
 2. Text message to every cell phone in Parish Soft
 3. Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms
 4. Record a video on your phone and upload the video to Facebook and other social media platforms that host video
 5. Ask every ministry leader to call all members of their ministry, asking each member to call as many parishioners as possible
 6. Get as many volunteers as possible to call as many parishioners as possible

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS, MASKS, AND MORE

- If any of the lay faithful are high-risk, or present any symptoms of illness, they are asked to NOT come to Mass. Out of respect for others we ask that they participate from home during the illness.
- The lay faithful who attend a Mass must bring their own cloth mask, which must be worn at all times.
- No one will be allowed to stay for Mass without a mask.
- The pastor should ensure that this rule is enforced; however, this must be enforced with the greatest of tact and kindness.
- Pastors should have extra masks available for anyone who arrives without a cloth mask.
- The lay faithful who attend an outdoor Mass must bring their own chairs.
- Members of the same households may sit together, but there must be a six-foot distance between households at all times.

BEFORE MASS BEGINS

- Priests must inform parishioners of the liturgical guidelines normative for the celebration of Mass during this time.
- Please see **Appendix A** for a suggested bulletin insert or handout that could/should be used prior to Mass.

PREPARATIONS AND LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Music must be limited to one instrumentalist and/or one cantor.
- Choirs will not be allowed.
- There are to be no altar servers.
- It is preferred that a priest or deacon proclaim all the Scripture readings. However, if a lay lector is utilized, only one is permitted.
- There is to be no offertory procession. There is to be a designated basket, away from the sanctuary, in which the lay faithful may place their financial offerings as they arrive to or depart from Mass.
- The Sign of Peace must be given without physical contact.
- Sound and speakers should be set up such that the lay faithful are able to hear withing social distancing restrictions.

REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

- It is strongly recommended that the distribution of Holy Communion be limited to priests serving the Mass. If the priest, for whatever reason, is unable to distribute Holy Communion, a deacon or lay extraordinary minister can distribute Holy Communion in his place. A deacon or lay extraordinary minister can also bring Holy Communion to satellite locations, such as the parish hall or parking lot.
- Those who distribute Holy Communion are to wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion and should visibly sanitize their hands before and after.
- As the lay faithful process to receive Holy Communion, a six-foot distance must be maintained. Ushers will assist in coordinating said distance.
- The communicant approaches, removing their mask.
- If the communicant is wearing gloves, they must remove their gloves before receiving Holy Communion.
- Considering the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the risks associated with its transmission, and health of those distributing Holy Communion, the lay faithful are strongly urged to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
- The priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, holding one edge of the consecrated host, places the outer edge of the consecrated host in the communicant's outstretched hand. The minister then reverently releases the consecrated host, allowing the remainder of the consecrated host to reverently fall into the communicant's outstretched hand without the hand of the minister making contact with the communicant's outstretched hand.
- Should any physical contact occur during the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, must stop and sanitize their hands immediately.



A PRIEST'S GUIDE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING

PART THREE

Guidelines for the celebration of Mass in a church with social distancing



WEAR A MASK



SOCIAL DISTANCING



NO PHYSICAL CONTACT

PART THREE | SECTION 1

Things you should consider now

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RSVP vs. First Come First Served

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Guidelines for the Mass itself

PART THREE

Guidelines for the celebration of Mass in the church with social distancing

PART THREE | SECTION 1 Things you should consider now

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND MASS IN THE CHURCH?

- Mass size will be limited to no more than 25% of Jimmie Danos' calculated maximum capacity.
- However, more importantly, social distancing must be guaranteed, regardless of how many people within said calculated number.
- Please see the chart below for maximum numbers of people allowed for Mass at this time.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PARISHIONERS ALLOWED PER INDOOR IN-CHURCH MASS DURING COVID-19 SOCIAL DISTANCING

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Annunziata, Houma (No more than 89 people) | • St. Charles Borromeo, Pointe-aux-Chenes (No more than 150 people) |
| • Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Gibson (No more than 82 people) | • St. Charles Borromeo, St. Charles (No more than 130 people) |
| • Christ the Redeemer, Thibodaux (No more than 187 people) | • St. Eloi, Dularge (No more than 128 people) |
| • Holy Cross, Morgan City (No more than 198 people) | • St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, Houma (No more than 239 people) |
| • Holy Family, Dulac (No more than 128 people) | • St. Genevieve, Thibodaux (No more than 160 people) |
| • Holy Savior, Lockport (No more than 143 people) | • St. Gregory Barbarigo, Houma (No more than 150 people) |
| • Maria Immacolata, Houma (No more than 135 people) | • St. Hilary, Mathews (No more than 207 people) |
| • Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Chackbay (No more than 160 people) | • St. James Mission Church, Choctaw (No more than 57 people) |
| • Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Golden Meadow (No more than 278 people) | • St. John, Thibodaux (No more than 143 people) |
| • Our Lady of the Isle, Grand Isle (No more than 125 people) | • St. Joseph, Chauvin (No more than 178 people) |
| • Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Houma (No more than 150 people) | • St. Joseph, Galliano (No more than 143 people) |
| • Our Lady of the Rosary, Larose (No more than 150 people) | • St. Joseph Co-Cathedral, Thibodaux (No more than 230 people) |
| • Sacred Heart, Cut Off (No more than 186 people) | • St. Lawrence the Martyr, Chacahoula (No more than 89 people) |
| • Sacred Heart, Montegut (No more than 114 people) | • St. Lawrence the Martyr, Kraemer (No more than 143 people) |
| • Sacred Heart, Morgan City (No more than 125 people) | • St. Louis, Bayou Blue (No more than 129 people) |
| • St. Andrew, Amelia (No more than 129 people) | • St. Lucy, Houma (No more than 85 people) |
| • St. Ann, Bourg (No more than 139 people) | • St. Luke, Thibodaux (No more than 78 people) |
| • St. Anthony, Bayou Black (No more than 111 people) | • St. Mary's Nativity, Raceland (No more than 243 people) |
| • St. Anthony, Gheens (No more than 79 people) | • St. Rosalie Mission Church, Stephenville (No more than 43 people) |
| • St. Bernadette, Houma (No more than 157 people) | • St. Thomas Aquinas, Thibodaux (No more than 77 + 78 people) |
| • St. Bridget, Schriever (No more than 143 people) | • Thanh Gia (Holy Family), Amelia (No more than 74 people) |

DO I NEED TO CELEBRATE ADDITIONAL MASSES TO ACCOMMODATE MORE PEOPLE?

- You have the option of celebrating additional Masses.
- Each priest is permitted (but not required) to celebrate up to two (2) Saturday Anticipated Masses and up to three (3) Sunday Masses for the duration of this phase of reopening.
- Any further additions must be first approved by Bishop Fabre.
- **One of the first things you need to do is finalize your Mass schedule. In other words:**
 1. Considering the limitations of how many people you can host for Mass in the church, are you going to add more Masses?
 2. Are any of those Masses going to be outdoors?
 3. How are you going to publicize the Mass schedule?

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE OR ELDERLY?

- It may be a good practice to designate one Mass as reserved for those who are at-risk so as to maximize their safety in going out and gathering in crowds.
- For example, a particular weekday or weekend Mass could be restricted to those who are immunosuppressed and/or are 65 years and older.

CAN I USE MY PARISH HALL AS A SATELLITE LOCATION AND DISTRIBUTE HOLY COMMUNION THERE TO ACCOMMODATE MORE PEOPLE?

- Those parishes who have the capacity to livestream Mass may consider using this technology to their advantage.
- If you have a parish hall located nearby on-campus that is large enough to allow people to gather while maintaining a six-foot social distance, this can be utilized only as needed as an overflow for your main church.
- You should not schedule people to attend in the parish hall.
- Parishes exercising this option would plan for distribution of Holy Communion to those in the satellite location during the same time Holy Communion is distributed in the church proper.
- The same rule of 25% maximum capacity is to be applied in the parish hall.

CAN PEOPLE BE IN THE PARKING LOT OR OUTSIDE?

- Those parishes who the capacity to livestream Mass may consider using this technology to their advantage.
- People are allowed to view the livestreamed Mass on their smartphone while standing outside or remaining in their vehicle.
- Parishes exercising this option would plan for distribution of Holy Communion to those outdoors or in their vehicle during the same time Holy Communion is distributed in the church proper.
- The same restrictions of social distancing are to be applied to those outside.

HOW DO I NEED TO PREPARE MY CHURCH (AND SATELLITE LOCATION)?

- Before and/or after each Mass, the entire church (and satellite location) must be properly sanitized with disinfectant. This includes the pews, doors, chairs and any surface that can be easily or frequently touched. A list of approved disinfectants for COVID-19 can be found online at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Hand sanitizer must readily available for all who come into the church (and satellite location).
- Holy water fonts must remain empty.
- There must be a six-foot distance between all households who attend Mass. This means that, for those who live together in the same household, they are allowed to be closer than six feet, but different households must maintain a six-foot distance. To assist with this, you are encouraged mark off pews such that this distance is maintained. You can either block off pews such that only certain pews are available to sit in, or you could designate which pews are available for sitting. Multiple households may be able to fit in a pew as long as there is a six foot distance between them.
- Additionally, items that typically remain in the pews - hymnals, missalettes, prayer cards, etc. - must be removed from the pews. If you wish, you can provide weekly disposable worship aids with the readings, music, and announcements for those who attend Mass. If these are handed to individuals, ensure that those volunteers are wearing gloves as they pass them out. These aids must be discarded and not reused by others.
 - Please note: Fr. Glenn LeCompte and the Office of Worship stand ready to assist any pastor regarding worship aids, licenses, etc.
- All of the aforementioned prescriptions are applicable to satellite locations.

PART THREE

Guidelines for the celebration of Mass in the church with social distancing

PART THREE | SECTION 2 RSVP vs. First Come First Served

HOW TO REGULATE MASS ATTENDANCE

- There are two primary methods for regulating Mass attendance, each with their pros and cons: the RSVP System, and the First Come, First Served System.
- Each pastor needs to determine which method is best based on his congregation size and on the needs of his parishioners. Evaluate your situation with your staff and parish leaders to determine how to move forward for your parish.
- It is critically important that each parish communicate thoroughly and well how they will be regulating Mass attendance. A video message or a letter to your parishioners is essential in doing this.

THE RSVP SYSTEM

- Under the RSVP system, people will reserve their spot for Mass through a phone call to the parish office or by signing up on your own online SignUpGenius.com roster.
- The RSVP system using SignUpGenius is highly recommended for parishes who's weekend Mass attendance exceeds 700 people.
- A video tutorial is available for those interested in SignUpGenius.
- What's required?
 1. Each parish must create a SignUpGenius.com list to manage. There are different "levels" of SignUpGenius, some of which are an expense. Parishes can determine which level they want to sign up for remaining on the free version or opting for one of the paid versions.
 - The Silver and Gold levels have additional features that may be helpful to parishes, such as a "Back to Website" button to direct people to your website and the ability to control when people can sign up for Masses (both of which are Gold features).
 - Parishes should opt for monthly payments rather than annual payments due to the short expected nature of these restrictions.
 2. Pastors should now determine who will manage the sign up roster for Masses. This person would set up and oversee the SignUpGenius roster as well as receive phone calls from people who wish to sign up.
 3. Phone call registrations should be added to the online SignUpGenius roster to ensure proper documentation. The ONE master list should be on SignUpGenius.
- Parishes can determine how to handle signups based on the needs of their particular communities. The following possibilities should be taken into consideration for your decision-making:
 1. Offering those without Internet time to register before those with Internet
 2. Encouraging people to sign up every so often (like once every two weeks) to allow all the opportunity to attend Mass
- Ushers or hospitality ministers should be at the door with the list from SignUpGenius to validate people coming to Mass. They should tactfully invite those who are not signed up to wait to fill in any open spaces, acknowledging to them that they may not be able to attend Mass in the church.

THE FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED SYSTEM

- Under the First Come, First Served system, all entrances to the church would be closed except for a single entrance with an usher or hospitality minister. Please note that due to Fire Marshall restrictions, these entrances must not be locked. Use a sign to indicate that these entrances are not to be used.
- The usher(s) must keep a tally of how many people come into the church.
- Once the maximum capacity is reached, no one can enter.
- Remember: Overflow in a satellite location is allowed.
- People should be permitted to enter as early as 30-minutes prior to Mass. It is recommended that they not be permitted to enter prior to that. Those who arrive earlier should remain in their vehicles until they can enter the church.
- Those who are keeping track of this should tactfully tell individuals that they will not be able to attend Mass in the church. You can invite them to come to another Mass or, at the pastor's discretion, guarantee them a spot at a future Mass.
- It is imperative that we all understand the need for the utmost tact and discretion needed in the event that you might have to turn someone away. A resource has been prepared to assist. Please see **Appendix C** for a suggested letter to be printed on your parish letterhead, signed by the pastor. This resource may be of assistance to those who cannot attend Mass.

PART THREE

Guidelines for the celebration of Mass in the church with social distancing

PART THREE | SECTION 3 Guidelines for the Mass itself

GETTING FROM THE PARKING TO THE VESTIBULE

- Ushers or hospitality ministers should be at the door — wearing masks, door propped open if possible.
- If the RSVP system is used, someone should have the list from SignUpGenius at the door to validate those who come in. Having a laptop with the SignUpGenius pulled up is preferred.
- If the RSVP system is not used, someone should be keeping a strict tally of how many people enter the church.

WHAT IF I HAVE TO TURN SOMEONE AWAY BECAUSE EITHER THEY AREN'T ON THE RSVP LIST OR THE CHURCH IS ALREADY FULL?

- Under either system, ushers and/or ministers of hospitality must have the tact and strength to handle any difficulties that may come up with regards to these limitations on attendance. Be understanding and compassionate, offer them to try another Mass.
- **Remember, this is many of our parishioners' first physical encounter with the parish community for over a month. It is incredibly important that we welcome each person warmly and well. Don't allow the check-in or tally system to make the church feel cold and guarded. Have your hospitality ministers or ushers there to enter into conversation with those who come.**
- You can invite them to wait either outside or in their vehicle to see if there are any available spaces in the church.
- If you're using the RSVP system, if someone who had registered doesn't show up, then you can fill that spot. However, we cannot exceed our maximum capacity for any reason.
- Remember, parish halls (satellite locations) can be used for overflow.
- If the church is full and there is no space for additional people, you can invite them to watch the livestream of the Mass remotely, either in their vehicles or parish halls (satellite locations), and wait until after Mass to receive Holy Communion. See the guidelines for distributing Holy Communion to these.

WHAT IF SOMEONE WHO APPEARS TO HAVE SYMPTOMS TRIES TO COME TO MASS?

- If someone who appears to have obvious symptoms tries to come to Mass, kindly invite them to watch via livestream remotely.
- However, give the person the benefit of the doubt if they try to come to Mass. Only in extreme circumstances should this action be taken.

WHAT IF SOMEONE COMES WITHOUT A MASK?

- Each parish should have extra cloth masks to provide to those who do not have a mask.
- No one is to be allowed into the church without a mask.

SEATING

- Each family takes one of the clearly marked available seats in the church.
- Households should be properly spaced at all times, maintaining a six-foot distance.
- If you have a bulletin or handout, you can have individuals with masks and gloves handing them to each person as they enter the church.

BEFORE MASS BEGINS

- Priests must inform parishioners of the liturgical guidelines normative for the celebration of Mass during this time.
- Please see **Appendix B** for a suggested bulletin insert or handout that could/should be used prior to Mass.
- The following announcements are to be made prior to the start of each Mass:
 1. There is to be no physical contact during the Sign of Peace. A simple bow or some other acknowledgment will suffice.
 2. Holy Communion will be distributed under one species. The Precious Blood will not be distributed.
 3. As the lay faithful process to receive Holy Communion, a six-foot distance must be maintained. Ushers will assist in coordinating distance.
 4. The communicant approaches, removing their mask.
 5. If the lay faithful are wearing gloves, they must remove their gloves before receiving Holy Communion.
 6. Considering the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the risks associated with its transmission, and health of those distributing Holy Communion, the lay faithful are strongly urged to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
 7. The priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, holding one edge of the consecrated host, places the outer edge of the consecrated host in the communicant's outstretched hand. The minister then reverently releases the consecrated host, allowing the remainder of the consecrated host to reverently fall into the communicant's outstretched hand without the hand of the minister making physical contact with the communicant's outstretched hand.
 8. Should any physical contact occur during the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, must stop and sanitize their hands immediately.
 9. Individuals should take masks off for the reception of Holy Communion. Otherwise, it is to be worn at all times.

PREPARATIONS AND LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Music must be limited to one instrumentalist and/or one cantor. Choirs will not be allowed.
- There are to be no altar servers.
- It is preferred that a priest or deacon proclaim all the Scripture readings. However, if a lay lector is utilized, only one is permitted.
- There is to be no offertory procession. There is to be a designated basket, away from the sanctuary, in which the lay faithful may place their financial offerings as they arrive to or depart from Mass.
- The Sign of Peace must be given without physical contact.

REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

- It is strongly recommended that the distribution of Holy Communion be limited to priests serving the Mass. If the priest, for whatever reason, is unable to distribute Holy Communion, a deacon or lay extraordinary minister can distribute Holy Communion in his place. A deacon or lay extraordinary minister can also bring Holy Communion to satellite locations, such as the parish hall or parking lot.
- Those who distribute Holy Communion are to wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion and should visibly sanitize their hands before and after.
- As the lay faithful process to receive Holy Communion, a six-foot distance must be maintained. Ushers will assist in coordinating said distance.
- The communicant approaches, removing their mask.
- If the communicant is wearing gloves, they must remove their gloves before receiving Holy Communion.
- Considering the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the risks associated with its transmission, and health of those distributing Holy Communion, the lay faithful are strongly urged to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
- The priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, holding one edge of the consecrated host, places the outer edge of the consecrated host in the communicant's outstretched hand. The minister then reverently releases the consecrated host, allowing the remainder of the consecrated host to reverently fall into the communicant's outstretched hand without the hand of the minister making contact with the communicant's outstretched hand.
- Should any physical contact occur during the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, must stop and sanitize their hands immediately.

A PRIEST'S GUIDE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING

PART FOUR After Mass and Miscellaneous

AFTER MASS

- Parishioners are asked to leave the body of the church after Mass. There is to be no lingering inside after Mass.
- If outside, individuals must maintain a six-foot distance between households.
- Pastors should ensure that all pews, doors, and other surfaces are properly sanitized with disinfectant after each Mass.

DO I STILL HAVE TO LIVESTREAM MASSES?

- If you had been livestreaming your Masses for your people, it would be a good idea to continue to do so for the time being.
- Many people will not feel safe attending Mass, and it is likely that not everyone will be able to attend physically due to crowd limitations.
- Livestreaming Masses assures the availability for people who are unable to physically attend.

CAN I CELEBRATE MASS OUTDOORS? WHAT RESTRICTIONS SHOULD I ADHERE TO?

- At the pastor's discretion, outdoor Masses are allowed.
- See the *Guidelines for the Celebration of Mass Outdoors with Social Distancing* for more specific information on celebrating Mass outdoors.
- Please contact Bishop Fabre directly if you desire to celebrate more than one outdoor Mass per weekend.

CAN WE RESUME SMALL GROUP GATHERINGS AND OTHER PARISH FUNCTIONS?

- Let's focus on one thing at a time. At this point, any non-liturgical events should remain canceled until further notice from Bishop Fabre.
- We will revisit this as soon as we are able.

CAN WE BEGIN BRINGING HOLY COMMUNION TO THE SICK AGAIN? AND, IF SO, WHICH PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN?

- Holy Communion can be brought to the sick and homebound.
- The priest or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion should wear a mask at all times.
- It is very strongly preferred that Holy Communion be given outside the communicant's home, if the communicant is able to go outside.
- The minister should have hand sanitizer to use immediately before and after giving Holy Communion and should not stay to visit with the communicant.

APPENDIX A



THE DIOCESE OF HOUMA-THIBODAUX

GUIDELINES FOR THE LAY FAITHFUL DURING THE CELEBRATION OF MASS OUTDOORS WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING EFFECTIVE MAY 9, 2020



WEAR A MASK



SOCIAL DISTANCING



NO PHYSICAL CONTACT

DO I HAVE TO GO TO MASS?

- Until further notice, all Catholics in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux remain dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass.
- Therefore, you do not have to attend Mass if you are unable or feel unsafe in doing so. You may observe the Lord's Day by praying together as a family, by watching a Mass via livestream, or by doing some other act of devotion.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

- Mass will feel a bit different for the time being. It will likely not be the triumphant return that many of us are imagining. Safety precautions required are not ideal; however, your health and safety remain a priority.

ARE THERE ANY REQUIREMENTS I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

- If any of the lay faithful are high-risk, or present any symptoms of illness, they must NOT come to Mass. Out of respect for others we ask that they participate from home during the illness.
- The lay faithful who attend a Mass must bring their own cloth mask, which must be worn at all times.
- No one will be allowed to stay for Mass without a mask.
- The lay faithful who attend an outdoor Mass must bring their own chairs.
- Members of the same households may sit together, but there must be a six-foot distance between households at all times.
- Ushers must ensure that this distance is respected.
- Sound and speakers should be set up such that the lay faithful are able to hear within social distancing restrictions.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

- The lay faithful who attend a Mass must bring their own cloth mask, which must be worn at all times. No one will be allowed to stay for Mass without a mask. They must be taken off so that you might receive Holy Communion, but otherwise they must be worn for the entire time that you are on church grounds.
- Music will be limited to one instrumentalist and one cantor. Choirs will not be allowed.
- There are to be no altar servers.
- It is preferred that a priest or deacon proclaim all the Scripture readings. However, if a lay lector is utilized, only one is permitted.
- There is to be no offertory procession. There is to be a designated basket, away from the sanctuary, in which the lay faithful may place their financial offerings as they arrive to or depart from Mass.
- The Sign of Peace must be given without physical contact.
- We respectfully ask that there be no congregating after Mass. The lay faithful are respectfully asked to depart after Mass is concluded.

REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

- As the lay faithful process to receive Holy Communion, a six-foot distance must be maintained. Ushers will assist in coordinating said distance.
- The communicant approaches, removing their mask.
- If the communicant is wearing gloves, they must remove their gloves before receiving Holy Communion.
- Considering the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the risks associated with its transmission, and health of those distributing Holy Communion, the lay faithful are strongly urged to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
- The priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, holding one edge of the consecrated host, places the outer edge of the consecrated host in the communicant's outstretched hand. The minister then reverently releases the consecrated host, allowing the remainder of the consecrated host to reverently fall into the communicant's outstretched hand without the hand of the minister making contact with the communicant's outstretched hand.
- Should any physical contact occur during the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, must stop and sanitize their hands immediately.

HOW CAN I HELP MY PARISH?

- First and foremost, pray for your parish and pray for your priests! These are extraordinary circumstances and difficult guideline to enforce. No one enjoys having to do this. Your prayers and your patience are greatly appreciated.
- Offer to assist! Ushers and hospitality ministers will be more important than ever and will have to be present at each Mass. Offer to volunteer your time or any particular gifts you have to assist your parish in these new endeavors.
- Follow the guidelines as they have been explained here. Take proper hygiene measures and adhere to any system which your parish may institute.
- Continue to offer your financial support to your parishes. Only together can we continue to move forward! We are grateful for your generosity.

APPENDIX B



THE DIOCESE OF HOUMA-THIBODAUX

GUIDELINES FOR THE LAY FAITHFUL DURING THE CELEBRATION OF MASS IN A CHURCH WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING EFFECTIVE MAY 16, 2020



WEAR A MASK



SOCIAL DISTANCING



NO PHYSICAL CONTACT

DO I HAVE TO GO TO MASS?

- Until further notice, all Catholics in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux remain dispensed from their obligation to attend Sunday Mass.
- Therefore, you do not have to attend Mass if you are unable or feel unsafe in doing so. You may observe the Lord's Day by praying together as a family, by watching a Mass via livestream, or by doing some other act of devotion.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

- Mass will feel a bit different for the time being. It will likely not be the triumphant return that many of us are imagining. Safety precautions required are not ideal; however, your health and safety remain a priority. In order to resume the public celebration of Mass, there are procedures that must be in place.

HOW MANY PEOPLE?

- Mass size will be limited to no more than 25% of Diocesan calculated maximum capacity.
- Limiting the number of people at each Mass is difficult. We thank you for your patience and understanding.

WHAT CAN I DO BEFOREHAND?

- Mass attendance will be limited, either through an RSVP system or on a First Come, First Served basis. Please consult your parish website or social media communication for more information.
- If your parish is using an RSVP system, you can assure your spot at Mass by signing up via the RSVP system of your parish. This can generally be done either through a phone call to your parish office or through the online system your parish has set up. Again, Check consult your parish website or social media communication for more information.
- If your parish is using a First Come, First Served system, it is recommended that you arrive as early as 30 minutes before Mass time, but not earlier. If you arrive earlier, you should remain in your vehicle until you can enter the church.
- None of us what to turn away someone from attending Mass; however, the restrictions are for the health and safety of you, your family, those others attending, and those serving you at Mass. Please be understanding if you are not able to attend Mass.
- If any of the lay faithful are high-risk, or present any symptoms of illness, they are asked to NOT come to Mass. Out of respect for others we ask that they participate from home during the illness.

ARE THERE ANY REQUIREMENTS I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

- The lay faithful who attend a Mass must bring their own cloth mask, which must be worn at all times. No one will be allowed to stay for Mass without a mask. They must be taken off so that you might receive Holy Communion, but otherwise they must be worn for the entire time that you are at Mass.

WHAT ABOUT WHEN I GET TO CHURCH?

- Members of the same households may sit together, but there must be a six-foot distance between households at all times.
- Ushers will ensure that this distance is respected.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

- At all times, a six-foot social distance will have to be maintained between households. To help with this, your parish may rope off certain pews or designate pews for people to sit.
- Multiple households can sit in a pew as long as the six-foot distance is maintained.
- Masks are to be worn at all times. They must be taken off so that you might receive Holy Communion, but otherwise they must be worn for the entire time that you are on church grounds.
- Hand sanitizer should be available and used regularly.
- Follow the instructions of your parish in terms of physical contact and distribution of Holy Communion. You are asked to receive Communion on your hand, holding it out flatly such that the priest can distribute without any physical contact.
- Parents with small children should remember that cry rooms will not meet the social distancing criteria.
- Music will be limited to one instrumentalist and one cantor. Choirs will not be allowed. There are to be no altar servers.
- It is preferred that a priest or deacon proclaim all the Scripture readings. However, if a lay lector is utilized, only one is permitted.
- There is to be no offertory procession. There is to be a designated basket, away from the sanctuary, in which the lay faithful may place their financial offerings as they arrive to or depart from Mass.
- The Sign of Peace must be given without physical contact.
- We respectfully ask that there be no congregating after Mass. The lay faithful are respectfully asked to depart immediately after Mass is concluded.

REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

- As the lay faithful process to receive Holy Communion, a six-foot distance must be maintained. Ushers will assist in coordinating said distance.
- The communicant approaches, removing their mask.
- If the communicant is wearing gloves, they must remove their gloves before receiving Holy Communion.
- Considering the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the risks associated with its transmission, and health of those distributing Holy Communion, the lay faithful are strongly urged to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
- The priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, holding one edge of the consecrated host, places the outer edge of the consecrated host in the communicant's outstretched hand. The minister then reverently releases the consecrated host, allowing the remainder of the consecrated host to reverently fall into the communicant's outstretched hand without the hand of the minister making contact with the communicant's outstretched hand.
- Should any physical contact occur during the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest, deacon, or lay extraordinary minister, must stop and sanitize their hands immediately.

HOW CAN I HELP MY PARISH?

- First and foremost, pray for your parish and pray for your priests! These are extraordinary circumstances and difficult guideline to enforce. No one enjoys having to do this. Your prayers and your patience are greatly appreciated.
- Offer to assist! Ushers and hospitality ministers will be more important than ever and will have to be present at each Mass. Offer to volunteer your time or any particular gifts you have to assist your parish in these new endeavors.
- Follow the guidelines as they have been explained here. Take proper hygiene measures and adhere to any system which your parish may institute.
- Continue to offer your financial support to your parishes. Only together can we continue to move forward! We are grateful for your generosity.

APPENDIX C

TO BE PRINTED ON PARISH LETTERHEAD AND SIGNED BY THE PASTOR

If you are receiving this message, then you were unable to enter into your church parish physically for the celebration of Mass.

First and foremost, I want to tell you that I am sorry. It hurts me greatly that we cannot welcome all of our people into their parishes for the celebration of Mass. It hurts me very deeply that some people will be prevented from coming into their church building. That is something that no one should ever have to experience. I am so very sorry that you couldn't come in.

While we are able to have the public celebration of Mass, we must also abide by state and federal guidelines in having these celebrations. That means that we have to limit the number of people in our church buildings. It's a difficult decision to have to make and implement, but it is ultimately for the physical health and wellbeing of our communities.

If you are able, I invite you to remain in the parish hall or your vehicles and participate in Mass through our livestream. Your priest will come to distribute Holy Communion to you.

I know this is not the situation we desired, but I know that the Lord will continue to reveal his closeness to us in these days. Know of my particular prayers for you. I am so very grateful to you for your patience, your understanding, and your prayer.

May God's peace be with you.

APPENDIX D



From Bishop Shelton Fabre

To all ushers and hospitality ministers:

Peace be with you! I pray that these days, despite their difficulties and challenges, have been days of encounter with the Lord and of personal growth. I have been praying for you as we journey together in these unique times.

As you are probably aware, our public celebrations of Mass are beginning to return. Initially we will have outdoor Masses, and we anticipate beginning indoor Masses once Governor Edwards lifts the stay at home order. However, these celebrations will have to have several restrictions to ensure everyone's safety during this time of pandemic. You, the ushers and hospitality ministers, have an important role in ensuring that these procedures are followed. I therefore wanted to send a special message to you.

As Masses are celebrated outdoors, the following guidelines must be kept in mind:

1. Households must remain six feet apart at all times, even in the Communion line. No congregating can happen.
2. Masks must be worn at all times by all individuals.

As Masses are eventually celebrated indoors, the following guidelines must be kept in mind:

1. Households must remain six feet apart at all times, even in the Communion line. No congregating can happen.
2. Masks must be worn at all times by all individuals.
3. We will be limited on how many people may enter the church. This will be maintained either by a First Come, First Served system or an RSVP system. Your priest will have more details for the practices of your specific parish.

My dear ushers and hospitality ministers, people have been longing for Mass, longing for the Eucharist, as I am sure you have been as well. Never before in any of our lives have we been forced to go so long without physically going to Mass or receiving the Eucharist. People are excited to finally return. I am excited for them to return. It is incredibly important that our people's first physical encounter with their parish community after so long a hiatus is both a safe encounter and a good encounter, despite difficult decisions that may have to be made.

As you encounter people, greet them warmly and with joy. Ask how they have been doing. Let them feel welcomed by their parish community. If someone comes without a mask, kindly remind them of their necessity or offer them one if your parish has extras, while recognizing that they cannot remain without a mask. If households break the six-foot distance rule, kindly remind them of the importance of these distances.

If, when the indoor celebration of Mass begins, people cannot enter the church, offer your sincere apologies, explain the reasoning to them well, and invite them to participate either from your parish hall or from their vehicles, reminding them that they can remain for the reception of Holy Communion.

A sample script could be something like: "I'm very sorry, but we cannot allow anyone else into the church building at this time due to state crowd restrictions. If you'd like, you can watch our livestream from the parish hall or from your car, and Father will come to distribute Holy Communion. Thank you so much for your patience and understanding!"

It's important that these people do not feel rejected or excluded. We cannot let these restrictions make the church seem cold or guarded. Let them know that we are doing everything we can. Offer your sympathies and show them your warmth and kindness.

I am grateful for the ministry that you offer to your parishes, which is perhaps more important now than ever. Know of my continued prayers for you in these days.

May God's peace be with you!

Shelton J. Fabre
Bishop, Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux