

St Robert Bellarmine Parish Good Shepherd Parish

Guidelines for Mass during the Coronavirus Pandemic Starting May 18, 2020

Diocesan guidelines state in summary the following:

- **Dispensation** - Bishop Boyea dispensed from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass to all the faithful through July 31, 2020.
- **Health and Ages of Mass attendees** - Those older than 65 years old (the recommended CDC age), and those with a compromised health condition or those caring for the sick in any way, are encouraged to stay home. Also, anyone who is ill, has a temperature, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue, runny nose, loss of taste and smell, Covid toe, etc. should stay home and away from the public, including coming to Mass as an act of justice to the whole community. Parents have the option to leave their children home if they feel it appropriate under the current circumstances.
- **Health of our Priests** - If Fr. Jonathan or Fr. Anthony experience any of these symptoms or develop a respiratory infection of any kind, we will avoid celebrating public Masses or administering the sacraments. The same will apply to our deacons or anyone helping at our Masses (cantors, pianists, greeters, etc).
- **Phase 1,**
 - **Masses will be limited to 5% capacity of our church buildings.**
This means no more than 40 people at our SRB Church and 25 people at our GS Church.
 - **First consideration, or pride of place, will be given to the Elect, Candidates for Full Communion, those receiving the sacraments of confirmation and first communion, and those assisting them.** (At SRB, this will be almost all the Masses before June.)
 - Once our Confirmation candidates and 1st Communicants have received their Sacraments, attendance of subsequent Masses will be determined by drawing names of those who have indicated their desire to attend Mass, if needed. We desire the presence of all our parishioners, indeed all in our community at our Masses.
 - As we are greatly limited in our capacity during these Masses, we will have to stop once we reach 5% capacity (May 18th – May 28th) 25% capacity (May 29th on). We will keep our doors open until that point. Out of justice (and certainly charity too) we ask those who have been able to attend Mass to give all others the opportunity to attend Mass before filling an open spot at a later Mass.
 - In an effort to keep us safe while attending Mass, **entering and**

exiting the church will be through the doors by Mary's Room only. (St. Robert's) The South Doors closest to the Family Life Center. (Good Shepherd) All of doors will be locked.

- **Physical Distancing-** this is to be observed in our churches, all parish buildings, and outdoors. Physical distancing will be signified by signs, tape or other means where helpful.
 - **There is to be no gathering or socializing before or after Mass** in the narthex, nave or other parts of the church buildings.
 - **There will be no procession or recession from the back of church.** The priest and deacon will process out from the sacristy.
 - **There will be no offertory procession along with the gifts.** The gifts will be placed on the credence table before Mass.
 - **There will be no sign of peace during Mass.**
 - **There will be no servers at most Masses.** For Ascension and Pentecost Sunday there may be one server to assist with incense.

- **Seating of the assembly** - every other pew will be closed to facilitate social distancing.
 - **Pews will be marked** to help non-household individuals keep proper spacing in the same pews.
 - **Those living in the same household** may sit together without distancing Priest and deacons, to the extent possible should remain 6' apart.
 - As **St. Timothy's chapel at SRB** will still be used as a confessional it **will be closed** for use during Mass.
 - As the **Holy Family Room at GS** is being used as a confessional, but can be easily adapted as a cry room, it can be used as a cry room, but because of social distancing, **no more than one family can be using it at a time**, and there should be disinfecting of the pews and door handles done after they leave.

- **Cloth Face Coverings (Masks)** - it is requested that face masks be worn by everyone approaching the church and inside the church (except for those children too young to do so.) The priest celebrant, deacon and other ministers need not wear masks during the liturgy while they are fulfilling their role. In the case of a lector, once they have left the sanctuary, they should replace their mask.

- **Collections:** each basket should be handled by one person only and sanitized before

and after being handled during Mass. Alternative options should be explored to come up with a suitable way for the faithful to drop their collection with needing to touch anything.

- **Holy Water and Baptismal fonts are to remain empty -**

- The parish is providing small holy water bottles.
- holy water reservoirs will be kept full with exorcised and blessed holy water/salt in a sanitary way so that the faithful can carry their own holy water bottles with them and use as they desire.
- **Music** - Music and singing is an integral part of the Mass, though not absolutely necessary. Evidence shows that singing is a high risk activity because it not only increases the number of droplets and spreads them farther but also aerosols the corona virus, which highly increases the risk of spread.

- At those Masses where we have music, **the faithful are encouraged to listen** during the Mass parts and join in their hearts but not outwardly.

- We will limit the number of cantors to no more than three at any Mass. Most of the Mass, including the signing of Mass parts will be done by one cantor.

- Because there is no long procession or signing by the assembly, cantors are encouraged to sing the entrance antiphon.

- Where instrumental music is possible and appropriate, we will choose this. For example, during communion, the risk increases as people are moving about, taking masks off, etc. This would be a time where having only one cantor signing, or simply singing the communion antiphon and then having instrumental music would be the better choice.

- Hymnals will be removed from the pews.

- For even the spoken Mass parts, we ask that everyone respond in a quiet voice.

- **Bathrooms** - Bathrooms can be a big risk area for the spread of the virus. We ask that you refrain from using the church bathrooms except in case of an emergency.

- At SRB the only bathroom that will be open will be the ones next to the music room and across from the lender library. This allows for more prompt disinfecting and the distancing reduces risk further for the rest of the faithful.

- **Cleaning and Disinfecting** - To help reduce (and ideally stop) the spread of the virus

effective cleaning and disinfecting is essential.

- At SRB we invite everyone to enter by the doors next to Mary's room/approaching the lower entrance of the school.
 - At GS we invite everyone to enter by the doors that lead directly into the nave of the church, the doors in the corner of the church.
 - There will be greeters at these doors to reduce contact with the door handles, etc. Limiting the access points limits contact.
 - Propping open inner doors will help limit contact, so it should be done wherever possible.
 - Clergy and others who assist at Mass are to wash their hands before and after set-up for Mass as well as after Mass.
 - Any and all vessels and other items (ex. liturgical books, ambo, credence table, etc) used at Mass will be sanitized before Mass. Those items used by the priest should be sanitized by him and not touched by anyone else. A similar approach should be followed with those items that will be handled only by the deacon, lector, etc.
 - Vessels will be washed with soap and water after Mass and all other items properly disinfected.
 - Hand sanitizer is available at all the entrances to the church. As best we can Clorox wipes (or something similar) will be at the end of each open pew to encourage the faithful to disinfect after themselves.
 - The faithful are invited to bring their own sanitizer and use it before receiving Holy Communion.
 - Hand sanitizer should be available in the sanctuary on the credence table.
- **Distribution of Holy Communion** - Those hosts that will be consecrated and distributed to the faithful should be in a separate ciborium from the celebrant host and placed on the altar/corporal in a way that the priest does not breath on these hosts.
 - There will be no distribution of the Precious Blood.
 - The faithful will be released from their pew by an usher. They are asked to remain until such time. Social distancing is to be observed as the faithful come forward and wait to receive.
 - **The faithful are encouraged to sanitize their hands with hand sanitizer** as the minister of Holy Communion is washing his hands.

- – **Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if someone is wearing a glove.**
 - When approaching the priest or deacon, the communicant is to wait with mask on at the first pew. The priest will show the host and say, “The Body of Christ.” **The communicant responds, “Amen,” removes their mask, comes forward and either receives in the hand standing or kneeling, or receives on the tongue kneeling.** If one is unable to kneel, they may stand when receiving on the tongue.
 - To the best of their ability, breathing is to be kept to a minimum while minister and communicant are near one another.
 - The communicant is to consume the Host, replace their mask and return to their seat.
 - If the minister of Holy Communion inadvertently touches the hand or mouth/face of the communicant, there should be soapy water, towel and hand sanitizer nearby by so he can pause, wash and sanitize his hands and then continue with distribution of Holy Communion.
- **Communication** - Our parishes will utilize all means of communication to help us all know and follow the new practices and guidelines in and around the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
 - These include but need not be limited to: large signage at the entrances of the church buildings, on our website, app, social media, email sent out with the guidelines and a reminder (or update email as we move through “phases” on our return to full participation at the Mass) email once per week, recorded message from Fr. Jon sent out to every parishioner’s phone, instruction videos with our new guidelines, and school families receive info through email, school website, etc.