

Dear Parishioners of Sacred Heart Church,

I am writing with great joy to inform you that Bishop David O'Connell has informed all parishes that we may begin Weekday "in church" public Masses – with no more than 25 persons attending beginning Monday, June 8 observing certain requirements. You can read Bishop O'Connell's statement in its entirety [at this link](#).

At this time, the Bishop has informed us that the dispensation from Sunday/Holy Day Mass will remain in effect until Monday, September 7, 2020 and the fulfillment of the Easter Duty is extended to the First Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2020.

He also states (and this is most important to remember):

"Those who are hesitant or fearful because of COVID-19 concerns as well as those with a COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms, those who may be asymptomatic carriers, those not feeling well, those with underlying health conditions or those in a high-risk category should stay at home and avoid any public gathering."

I truly understand the deep longing and strong need we all have to celebrate Mass and receive Holy Communion but I also need to stress, at this time, the importance of patience, common sense, the health and well-being of ourselves, our loved ones and all the members of our wonderful faith community.

With that being said, I offer the following directives for public "in Church" weekday Masses beginning at Sacred Heart Church on Monday, June 8, 2020:

- Weekday Mass will be celebrated Monday-Friday at 7:00 AM and 8:30 AM and on Saturday at 8:30 AM. (Our usual weekday schedule). I will communicate, if necessary, any changes in this schedule.
- No more than 25 people in attendance. To insure social distancing please be seated in designated pews with no more than 4 persons 'spaced' across the pew and no more than 3 persons in the last pews. This applies to groups from the same household, and any other groups/individuals and between single individuals.
- All persons will enter through the Main Entrance of the Church. No gathering at entrance, on steps or in parking lot. Masks must be worn at all times, regular hand washing should take place before and after Mass. Rest Rooms will be open.
- There will be no gathering/greeting before or after Mass, no communal prayers/devotions before or after Mass, no missalettes, hymnals or any printed material in or near the pews, no congregational singing, no collection will be taken up (a container for parish offerings will be placed in the vestibule of the Church), no Presentation of Gifts, and no Sign of Peace.

- Communion will be distributed only as the Body of Christ. The Chalice will not be offered or shared. Communion in the hand is preferred. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion on the tongue should be last in line and receive from Father John only. Masks may be removed for Communion and then placed back on. Social distancing between those in the Communion line (6 feet apart) must be maintained.
- At the conclusion of Mass, parishioners will exit the Church, pew by pew, beginning with the last pew, maintaining social distance and returning immediately to their cars.
- Sanitation of the Church will begin as soon as all have departed.

In the coming weeks, I will share with you the Parish directives for limited public celebration for Sunday Mass and the other Sacraments of the Church.

As we begin, in this small way, to gather together again to celebrate Mass and receive the Eucharist, let us remember that all of our gatherings, in Church, at home, on-line, even when only two or three are present, that the Lord is truly in our midst.

“O how lovely is your dwelling place,
Dwelling of the Lord of hosts!
How we long for your house, O Lord,
Singing out a song of joy
To the living God.”

(Based on Psalm 84)

May the blessing of Almighty God come upon you and remain with you forever.

Father John