

St. Charles protocols for returning to Mass



As we start to reopen St. Charles, we are making every effort to minimize risk to our parishioners and visitors. We are using best practices put forth by the CDC and the Archdiocese. The following protocols will be used to reopen St. Charles safely.

Wondering if you should attend Mass in person or not?

- While we desire to be together and worship with our entire parish family, our first consideration must continue to be for the spiritual and physical health of our parishioners and those whom they encounter. We continue to rely on medical professionals and governmental standards to inform these directives.
- Please stay at home if you (or someone you live with) are experiencing flu-like symptoms or if you are caring for someone sick. The Archdiocese highly recommends that you remain home if you are over 65 and/or if you are considered “high risk.” If you are in the above categories, please participate by watching Mass online/TV/radio through this duration of Phase II.
- The maximum number of persons admitted into our building is limited to 50% of the total seating capacity + social distancing. (100-175 people depending on family size)
- Each person must remain 6 feet away in all directions from others not in the same household. Ushers will help us maintain a safe number of parishioners gathered at each Mass. Once our maximum number of attendees is reached, ushers will have to turn people away and encourage parishioners to attend a different Mass or participate virtually off-site.
- The Obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation continues to be suspended as long as the pandemic continues.
- We will continue to provide links on our website (stcharlesbayport.com) to important resources including links to online Masses and updates within the parish.
- The primacy of Sunday is to be respected, even for those unable to attend in person. If social distancing restrictions make attending Sunday Mass/Saturday Vigil impossible or inadvisable, please consider instead attending Mass on a weekday with smaller crowds.

Preparing for Mass:

- The faithful are required to wear face coverings before, during, and after Mass. (Executive Order 20-81) Note special instructions for receiving Communion below.
- Face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Please consider bringing hand sanitizer to use before Mass and before receiving Holy Communion.
- We recommend parishioners use the restroom at home before coming to church.
- Please use social distancing when greeting one another before or after Mass outside.
- Do not congregate in the back of church as it is difficult to keep separation.

What to Expect at Mass:

- The priest will serve as the only Minister of Holy Communion. No altar servers or sacristans will be assisting with liturgies at this time.
- Our priest, ushers, and all assisting with the liturgy will use hand sanitizer, and observe other good hygienic practices before and after Mass.
- Congregational singing is to be temporarily discontinued; our cantor and/or organist will offer music on behalf of the congregation. Hymnals have been temporarily removed.
- Water fonts will remain empty; the Sign of Peace, holding hands during the Lord's Prayer, and other physical greetings remain suspended.
- Pews, doorknobs, restrooms and other high-use areas will be sanitized after each liturgy and other regular intervals.
- Doors will be propped open before/after Mass to minimize touch and to maximize air circulation. Ushers at the doors will help promote social distancing as parishioners enter.
- Bulletins remain available online, and will be available for pick up as well.
- The faithful can drop offerings into a basket at the back of church before Mass. Online donations are also encouraged.
- The "Cry Room" will be unavailable during this time.

Distribution of Holy Communion:

- As of September 4th, Communion will be distributed during Mass at the regular time. Please follow the tape on the floor as you come forward for Communion. Please social distance, except from those in your own household.
- The Archbishop recommends receiving on the hand, but wearing gloves when receiving Communion in the hand, or receiving it in a paper tissue, plate, cup, or other disposable item is unbecoming of the Blessed Sacrament and is not to be done.
- The priest will hold up the host and (through his face mask) say, "The Body of Christ." Communicants will extend hands to receive host and reply, "Amen," and move to the side 6 feet, remove their face mask, and receive Communion.
- Our priest(s) will apply hand sanitizer before distributing Communion (and as needed between Communicants).

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we make every effort to minimize risk to all parishioners, especially those who are most vulnerable. This will require that each of us continue to be diligent in good hygiene, social distancing and these guidelines. We appreciate your willingness to adhere to these guidelines and subsequent revisions as we find practices that best suit our evolving parish needs.