

The public celebration of Mass is resuming at OLL!

The past two months have been very difficult for all of us for many reasons, one of which was the suspension of public masses. Thankfully, Archbishop Carlson has given us permission to resume the celebration of public Masses beginning on Monday, May 18th. We will begin daily public mass on Monday with our first Sunday Masses being celebrated on the evening of Saturday, May 23rd and the morning of Sunday, May 24th. We are far from being back to “the way it was,” so please pay attention to the following special policies and precautions that the Archdiocese of St. Louis has enacted for the safety of all in our parish family.

When will Mass be celebrated?

Beginning on Monday May 18th, we will resume our regular Mass schedule – Weekday masses are Monday through Saturday at 8:00am. Sunday masses are celebrated on Saturday at 5:00pm and Sunday at 8:00am and 10:00am.

Should I come to Mass?

First of all, it is very important to note that Archbishop Carlson has indefinitely extended the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Therefore, you are not required to come to mass on Sundays during this time. We are all called upon to pray and use our best judgment about whether or not to come to Mass.

With that in mind, anyone who is ill, symptomatic, or has been exposed to someone else with the coronavirus within 14 days cannot enter the church. This is in accord with national, state, and local health directives. We also ask everyone to check their temperature at home before deciding if you are coming to Mass. You can find the current symptoms of the coronavirus at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s website www.cdc.gov.

Additionally, those who are at risk because of an underlying health issue or who are over 60 are strongly encouraged, for their own health, to avoid the risk of attending public celebrations of the Mass.

What should I do if I cannot come to Mass?

We will continue to livestream our Masses. Mass will continue to be livestreamed Monday through Saturday at 8am and at 10am on Sundays, and will be accessible on our Facebook page and on our parish website.

How will we be kept safe when we come to Mass?

Archbishop Carlson has instructed parishes to ensure all pews are wiped down with disinfectant; that all hymnals and missalettes are removed; and that all surfaces used frequently (restroom facilities, door handles, etc.) are sanitized before each service.

Everyone attending Mass is obligated to wear a mask or other facial covering. The only exception during Mass is when receiving Holy Communion.

When you arrive at Church, there will be signs indicating the proper entrances, and we will have ushers counting to make sure we do not exceed the proper number of people in Church. In the unfortunate event that we fill the available spaces in Church you may be asked to return at another time or to watch/listen from the parking lot. At this time, we have plans to broadcast on radio as well as on the internet. The parish hall may be opened up to overflow if it is needed.

You'll be asked to observe social distancing – staying at least six feet from people not in your household. Only certain pews are available for seating. On weekdays, when you arrive, you are asked to take seats in the middle two sections of church. For Sunday liturgies, we will have ushers direct you to a seat. Please be patient with the ushers and others as these are new procedures for us all.

You'll find the holy water fonts are empty and that there is hand sanitizer available. Hymnals have been removed from the pews, and we will not be using song sheets.

You'll notice there will be no offertory procession, no sign of peace, and no passing of the collection basket.

You can drop your donation in a stationary basket near the main entrance, or continue to use Faith Direct online.

Can we receive Holy Communion?

Yes, but only the Most Precious Body and only by hand. This is in keeping with the advice of state health officials to avoid any possible contact with another person's saliva or particles exhaled from the communicants' mouth onto the ministers' fingers.

For the distribution of Holy Communion, ushers who are masked and gloved will ensure six-foot distancing in the Communion line. Floor markings have been placed six feet apart in the aisles in which the congregation approaches the sanctuary for Holy Communion to facilitate proper social distancing.

Communion ministers must be masked, sanitize their hands immediately before and after distributing Holy Communion, and when at all possible, should utilize a disinfectant wipe or purificator dipped in a sanitizing solution (at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol) to sanitize their fingers when incidental contact is made with the communicant.

When approaching the Communion minister, the communicant is to pull their mask or other facial covering below their chin and present one hand resting on the palm of the other. After responding "Amen," the communicant reverently places the Eucharist in his or her mouth and immediately replaces their mask or other facial covering.

What do we need to keep in mind as we leave Mass?

Please leave Mass together as a household, wearing your masks or other facial covering and observing six feet of distance from others. Father Jim, Sr. Marilyn, our deacons and seminarians will not be able to greet you after Mass, and we are not allowed to distribute bulletins or other materials after Mass. Unfortunately, we will not be permitted to congregate in the narthex, and no receptions or social gathering following Mass can be held.

What about Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, servers or choir members?

For the time being, the priest, deacons and seminarians will distribute Holy Communion. We will not need Extraordinary Ministers until the regulations are further relaxed.

Lectors are welcome to continue to serve in that capacity provided that they are following the other rules. They would not wear a mask while reading at the microphone.

We are blessed with many faithful servers. In order to keep proper social distancing, we will not have servers at weekday or Sunday masses until further notice.

Unfortunately, at this time, choirs are not allowed to assemble. Therefore, we will have a keyboardist and cantor to lead music at mass. Additionally we will not have music books available in the pews so we will choose music that many people may know from memory.

When should children wear masks?

Parents should determine when a child is old enough to attend Mass and can abide by the safety guidelines.

What about other parish meetings and social gatherings?

We can begin to allow meetings, as long as the requirements of six-foot social distancing and the wearing of masks can be observed. We encourage groups to conference by telephone or internet instead of meeting in person. Groups that are interested in the possibility of scheduling a meeting should contact the parish office to see if this will be possible.

Social gatherings will be allowed as soon as possible. Currently social gatherings are still forbidden to help ensure the health and safety of all parishioners. Unfortunately we have had to cancel the parish golf tournament, the parish festival, and the rummage sale.

What about other celebrations, such as First Communions, graduations, weddings, funerals, etc.?

We have been given the authority to schedule these and will be communicating plans in the near future. These celebrations will be subject to the same policies as other public Masses.

Fr. Jim Theby