

**General Guidelines for the Resumption of Public Masses  
in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee and  
Basilica of St Michael the Archangel**

May 4, 2020

As we prepare to resume celebrating Mass and other sacraments with our parishioners, some alterations to the usual details of the liturgy are being put in place in order to maintain required social distancing between those gathered in the church, and to minimize the risk of passing the virus from one to another. Given the diversity of parish sizes and demographics in this diocese, not to mention the differing architectures and layouts of our churches, these guidelines cannot cover every possible situation that will arise and may well need to be adjusted in some locales in response to local conditions and pastoral needs.

- 1. Dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday (Saturday evenings) will continue, since it will not be possible for everyone to attend on Saturdays & Sundays. Therefore, no one is obligated to participate in person at Mass at this time. The Basilica will continue to Live stream Mass on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. and Sundays during the 9:00 a.m. public Sunday Mass. Daily Mass in the Basilica is suspended until the completion of the interior restoration project.**
- 2. If a person is sick, has a persistent or new cough, or is vulnerable to infection, is within the vulnerable age range or has a pre-existing condition as spelled out by the CDC, or lives with or cares for someone who is vulnerable, they should remain home.**
- 3. Parishioners must sign-up for the Mass they wish to attend. This is necessary each week for each Mass. Each Mass will accommodate 50 of our registered Basilica parishioners. When a Mass time has reached the required attendance, it will be closed. There will be no wait listing. If a person registers for one Mass, they cannot change it to another Mass at the last minute. There will be a sign-in station at the main entrance to the Basilica for each Mass with the list of parishioners who signed up for that Mass. The main doors will open 20 minutes prior to Mass time for sign-in and be locked once the Mass has begun. The north and south doors will be used only for dismissal.**
4. Seating is staggered in order to maintain social distancing. Pews where seating is not permitted have caution tape placed across the length of the pew. Pews will accommodate no more than three parishioners, unless it is a family who may sit together in the same pews without observing distancing between family members.
5. All hymnals have been removed from the pews. A disposable, take away worship aid will be provided.
6. All parishioners attending Mass or other liturgical functions are asked to consider wearing protective facemasks.
7. While liturgical music is always to be encouraged, singing will be limited in order to keep down the possibility of spreading of airborne contagion particles.
8. Collection baskets will be placed at the doors. Baskets will not be passed around.
9. The Offertory procession is suspended.
10. The invitation to extend a Sign of Peace is be omitted as per rubrics in the *Roman Missal*.

11. The Precious Blood will not be distributed to the lay faithful for the duration of this emergency.
12. At the time of the distribution of Holy Communion, parishioners assembled for Mass will remain in place. The priest-celebrant and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will go to each pew to distribute Holy Communion. A parishioner who wishes to receive Holy Communion should stand as the signal to the Communion Minister that they wish to receive.
13. The priest-celebrant and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will sanitize their hands and don masks for the distribution of Holy Communion. After Holy Communion, they will remove masks and cleanse their hands again. Medical specialists have advised that there is little benefit from the priest or other ministers wearing gloves.
14. Communicants should be strongly urged to receive the Body of Christ on the hands as an act of charitable consideration for the health of their fellow parishioners. Distribution should be done with no contact to the recipients' hands, if possible. Father will train scheduled Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in this way of distributing.
15. Social distancing should be observed as the faithful leave the church. We will dismiss the congregation in small groups asking people to use the exit closest to their pew. We also require social distancing outside the Basilica on our sidewalks.
16. Pews and anything else that is accessible to the public will be disinfected after each Mass. Since the Basilica has a single restroom for public use, it will not be available before, during or after Mass.
17. These same general guidelines and crowd restrictions would also apply to funerals.