

St. Matthew Catholic Church

COVID-19 Re-Opening Guidelines for the Celebration of Holy Mass PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

With guidance from North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order No. 141, directives from His Excellency Bishop Peter Jugis, and recommendations from the St. Matthew COVID-19 Task Force, the guidelines noted below will be followed beginning Saturday, June 6, 2020, as we open our doors for the celebration of Holy Mass. Please note, that while able to open prior to this date, St. Matthew believes that the utmost care, safety and caution for our parishioners must be exercised, requiring certain measures be put in place to ensure a safe opening. Improved air filtration has been installed in the church, and hospital-grade disinfectants have been applied electrostatically to all contact surfaces in the church building in our attempt to provide a safe environment for worship.

You are reminded to follow the CDC recommendations regarding you own health. If you fall into any at-risk or vulnerable category, you are encouraged to stay home and participate in the Sunday celebration by watching Mass on MATTtv and offering a spiritual communion*. If you are not feeling well and have any COVID-19 symptoms, refrain from coming to the campus. Please remember that the bishop's order temporarily suspending the obligation to attend Mass remains in effect.

Facial coverings will be required to enter any building on campus for all individuals over the age of two. Please understand that entry will be denied if a face covering is not worn. *"And the king will say to the righteous in reply, 'Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40)*

Capacity – This Applies to Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses Only **

- Capacity will be limited as dictated by our governing bodies.
- Due to this limitation and acknowledging that the bishop's order releasing the obligation to attend Mass remains in effect, you may consider not attending Sunday Mass two weekends in a row. This selfless gesture will allow as many families as possible the opportunity to participate in Sunday Mass.
- Seating will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Entry to the church will be limited to the front entrance only. Side entrances will be locked and available for exiting only. This is done only to carefully monitor the number of parishioners within the worship space.

Before You Arrive for Mass

- Please use **your** restroom before leaving home. The narthex restrooms will be available for emergency use only.
- Wash your hands.
- Face coverings are required.
- Bring your own hand sanitizer that can be used before receiving Holy Communion. Please refrain from bringing products that contain bleach as they can damage the pews/chairs.

- All nurseries are closed until further notice. Parents with children may not congregate in the narthex during Mass.

When You Arrive for Mass

- Please arrive approximately 20-30 minutes before Mass begins.
- Face coverings should be in place as you leave your car or no later than as you approach the building.
- Please practice social distancing.
- Parish staff and ushers will assist you as you arrive and will also seat you.
- Seating will be filled from the front of the church to the back. Please remember that some pews/chairs may not be available to allow for the necessary social distancing.
- The center sections will be seated first followed by the outside sections, in order.
- **Should the church satisfy the reduced capacity and you have not yet been seated, please understand you will likely be asked to return to attend Mass at another time or on another day.**
- All pew kneelers are taped in the “up” position and will remain fixed throughout Mass.
- You may be sharing a pew/row with another household, but social distance is required between the households.
- There will be no congregating in the narthex before, during or after Mass.
- Hymnals and missals have been removed from pews and racks. The parish app has been updated with a new Worship button, which includes the order of the Mass as well as the readings of the day. Be sure to download the app by texting **App** to phone number **88202**, or visit www.myparishapp.com.
- All holy water fonts remain empty.

Mass Procedures

- Masses will be conducted with significantly fewer lay ministers. There will be no altar servers, choirs, or lay sacristans.
- Parish staff will function in many of the lay ministry roles.
- Please keep your face covering on for the duration of Mass.
- There is to be no physical contact between households during the *Our Father* or *Sign of Peace*.
- Baskets will not be passed during the offertory. Please place your weekly gift in the receptacle as you exit the church after Mass. Faith Direct offers the opportunity to give electronically; please ask any staff member for additional information, or <https://membership.faithdirect.net/NC36>.

Holy Communion Procedures

- Holy Communion will be distributed by clergy and may be assisted by parish staff.
- The clergy will purify and sanitize their hands between each communicant.
- Receiving in the hand is highly recommended.
- The precious blood will not be offered to the congregation.
- If a spiritual Communion is preferred, quietly recite the prayer displayed on the church screen while others receive Communion.
- Use your personal hand sanitizer before you leave your pew/chair.

- There will be a single Communion line in the center of each main aisle. Parish staff will assist ushers.
- Facial coverings should be worn in the Communion line. After the priest offers you Communion, please step to the side, remove your facial covering, consume the Eucharist, and then replace your facial covering as you move back to your pew/chair.

Mass Departure Procedures

- After the final blessing, please remain in your pew/chair.
- Pews/chairs will be dismissed in an orderly fashion starting in the rear of the church and moving forward.
- You must exit your pew/chair when prompted. Private prayer is not available after Masses in order for the church to be disinfected and reset for the next Mass.
- All exits of the church will be utilized during exiting.
- Printed weekly church bulletins are not available at this time.
- Clergy will not shake hands or engage in conversation in the narthex. They will wave as you exit.
- Please do not congregate outside but head directly to your vehicle to allow the next Mass to start on time.
- The chapels remain closed until further notice.

Church Cleaning Procedures

- Pews/chairs will be cleaned after each Mass.
- Bathrooms and “touch points” will be disinfected before and after Masses.
- Parish staff are required to wear face coverings, wash hands frequently, and will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms.

***Spiritual Communion**

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come now spiritually into my soul. As I await the next opportunity to attend Holy Mass and receive You sacramentally in Holy Communion, I wish for your indwelling in my soul. Amen.

****Daily Mass**

Please note: A reopen date has not yet been determined for Daily Mass. When Daily Mass resumes, seating in the main church will be on a first-come, first-serve basis until the designated capacity is reached.