

Upcoming changes in safety procedures at the parish

The country and our area have begun to reopen. Thank God! The Archdiocese of Washington has issued a set of new guidelines for church gatherings that are in accordance with CDC safety protocols. To this effect, the Parish Council consulted with me and we will be making some changes to our safety procedures at the church. **You can expect these changes to go into effect the weekend of July 3 and July 4.** Here are the changes:

Hymnals will be placed in the pews and used for singing. The Missal books, which have the Sunday readings, will also return to the pews.

Holy water will be placed in the main holy water basin and Mass goers are encouraged to bless themselves and their loved ones. Hand sanitizer will be provided as usual. The large canister filled with holy water will return to the back of church. You are invited to take blessed holy water to your home to use for personal and family blessings.

Since the majority of our parishioners have taken the COVID-19 vaccine, and in accordance with Mayor Bowser's instructions, masks will now be optional for public worship and gatherings. Parishioners who are not vaccinated are encouraged to continue to protect themselves from potential infection, by staying masked in the church and in any public places that they visit.

Social distancing guidelines are now at a three-foot minimum between households. In most pews, the tape that separated the pews will be removed. A small section of pews will have tape to provide more distancing, accommodating those who desire to maintain 6 feet of social distance.

I recommend arriving at church early to give yourself some extra time to assess these changes and make any necessary seating decisions. Because of confessions and attention given to the preparation of Mass, the pastor will not be available to discuss seating arrangements prior to the beginning of Mass.

Thank you for your continued awareness and vigilance in maintaining everyone's safety and wellness. I am very grateful that our parish has weathered the various difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic with grace and trust in God. Be assured of my continued prayers for a safe return to a more normal worship experience.

... and finally ...

Livestream Masses to end after July 4

Our Sunday parish Mass has been livestreamed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The equipment for the livestream was Father Cusick's personal cell phone. As Father Cusick departs to his new assignment, the livestream will no longer be available after July 4th. In some cases, a person may need to watch Mass, e.g., a quarantine situation. Masses on EWTN and from the National Shrine on the television are good options if there is a grave reason for not attending Sunday Mass.

God bless,
Fr. Cusick