

# Guidelines for Observing Social Distancing and other Health Requirements for the Celebration of Mass

The Bishops of Missouri establish the following common practices in the celebration of Mass to fulfill the requirements of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, with other directives to be determined by the individual Diocesan Bishops.

## Before Mass

1. To help alleviate crowds at our Masses, Fr. Michael has added an additional Mass at 7 AM on Sundays at St. Augustine Church. Therefore, the normal 8 AM Mass will be temporarily held at 8:30 AM at St. Augustine Church. We will continue to have the 4 PM Mass at St. Joseph and the 6 PM Mass at St. Augustine on Saturdays and the 10 AM Mass at St. Joseph on Sundays.
2. All four Diocesan Bishops have dispensed the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday until further notice. Therefore,
  - a. Those who are symptomatic or who have been exposed to another with the virus within 14 days are not permitted to enter the church, in accordance with national, state and local health directives. All attendees are asked to check their temperature at home before coming to church.
  - b. Those who are at risk because of an underlying health issue or who are 60 or older are strongly encouraged, for their own health, to avoid the risk of attending public celebrations of the Mass.
  - c. We will continue to live-stream the 8:30 AM Mass on Sundays at St. Augustine Church on both YouTube and Facebook.
3. All hymnals and missalettes are removed from the pews for the duration of the pandemic. The faithful are encouraged to bring their own missals, hymnals or smartphones for use during the celebration of Mass.
4. Hand sanitizer will be available, please use this upon entering church.
5. The faithful are obliged to wear a mask upon entering the church and during the celebration of Mass, except when remaining in the pew and for the brief moment of receiving Holy Communion. Ushers are to wear masks throughout the celebration of Mass. Those at the altar are to wear a mask if distributing Holy Communion.

## During Mass

1. Ushers will assist with directing people to pews specifically marked. Attendance may be limited to assure compliance with social distancing requirements. At the 8:30 am Mass at St. Augustine, ushers will direct people to the overflow in the school cafeteria.
2. Families are to maintain six-foot distancing between their family and other families or individuals throughout the celebration of Mass.
  - a. Seating is to be arranged such that six feet of distance can be maintained between members of one household and members of another. Those who arrive in the same vehicle and/or reside in the same house may sit in the same pew.
  - b. Pews marked with rope, tape, etc. may not be occupied.
3. Procession of the Gifts are suspended. Collection baskets will not be passed from one family to another, nor shall ushers take up the collection from the congregation. Stationary baskets are available for donations from the assembly and will be monitored by the ushers until the donations are collected.

## After Mass

1. Communion will be distributed after Mass exactly as we distribute Ashes on Ash Wednesday. The faithful are to immediately exit church after receiving communion.
  - a. People should make their Prayer of Thanksgiving at the same time as the priest during Mass or as they are exiting the Church.
  - b. A Prayer of Thanksgiving could include prayers of thanks, prayers for others and prayers for yourself.

2. For the distribution of communion, ushers who are masked will ensure six-foot distancing in the communion line by dismissing individual pews. Please wait in your pew until the usher releases you.
3. Communion ministers will be masked, sanitize their hands immediately before and after distributing Communion, and when at all possible, sanitize their fingers when incidental contact is made with the communicant.
4. Maintaining a single-file is necessary for the distribution of Holy Communion for each Communion minister and communicant to maintain social distancing.
  - a. At St. Augustine—Communicants seated on St. Joseph’s side will exit the pews to the side aisle and proceed to the back of church to receive Communion. Then, they will exit through the main doors of church. Communicants seated on St. Mary’s side would exit the pew to the center aisle and proceed toward the front of church to receive Communion. Then, they would exit via the south (side) door. (please see diagram below)
  - b. At St. Joseph—Communicants will receive Communion from Ministers stationed in front of the statues of St. Mary and St. Joseph and then exit through the side door of Church. (Please see diagram below)
5. During this time, Holy Communion will be distributed in the hand in keeping with the advice of state health officials and thereby to avoid the Communion minister’s fingers coming into contact with saliva or airborne contagion. This might be a good occasion to review proper reception: “When receiving in the hand, the communicant should be guided by the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem: ‘When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart, but rather place one hand as a throne beneath the other, as befits one who is about to receive the King. Then receive him, take care that nothing is lost.’” (*Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America, no. 41*)
6. When approaching the Communion minister, the communicant is to pull their mask below their chin in order to receive Communion. The communicant immediately replaces their mask after consuming the Host and is asked to proceed to the exit of church.
7. Family units should depart the church in an organized manner wearing masks and observing six feet of distance between other households. Ushers will help to direct this process.
8. Church bulletins will not be handed out by Ushers. Bulletins are emailed each week, posted on the parish Facebook pages and on the St. Augustine Parish Website. For those who want a physical bulletin, they will be out in the side entrance of St. Augustine Church on Thursdays by 2:30 PM. Pick them up carefully and evaluate the possible risk of contamination.
9. Clergy are not to greet parishioners as they exit the church. There are to be no receptions or social gatherings (e.g., coffee and doughnuts) following Mass.

