



ST. MARY CHURCH  
UXBRIDGE

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Effective Saturday, May 23, 2020 Bishop McManus is lifting the suspension of public celebrations of the Mass in the Diocese of Worcester. While we are excited to welcome you all back to Saint Mary Church for the celebration of Mass, we also want to ensure the health and safety of all our parishioners and guests. Please familiarize yourselves with these protocols and procedures for returning to Mass at Saint Mary Church. Although extensive, they will help to ensure a smooth re-opening.

***These protocols and procedures will be evaluated and amended each week in order to best serve the needs of our parish.***

### **Capacity & Seat Reservations for Mass**

- During this first phase of reopening, our Masses at Saint Mary Church will be limited to approximately **75 people**. (This is the estimated number of people who can be seated in the church while maintaining 6 feet of distance from others.)
- Because it is impossible to accommodate all our parishioners at Sunday Masses, we are requiring parishioners to reserve their seat(s) online before each weekend beginning on the Wednesday prior. If you attend Mass on one weekend, please consider skipping the next weekend in order to allow others the opportunity to attend Mass in person. (Tickets are currently not required to attend weekday Masses.)
- In order to reserve your seat(s) for Mass, please visit [www.stmaryuxbridge.org/mass-reservations](http://www.stmaryuxbridge.org/mass-reservations). Tickets are of course free and will be available on a first come/first serve basis.
- When reserving your seat(s) online, please include each member of your household who will be attending Mass.
- Technical support to assist with online reservations is available by phone during regular office hours (Monday – Thursday, 9 am – 5 pm) at 508-278-2226.
- The regular schedule of Masses resumes on May 23, 2020 (Saturday at 5 pm; Sunday at 7:30, 9, and 11 am; Monday – Thursday at 7 am).

### **Prior to Arriving**

- Those who are sick or symptomatic or have potentially been exposed to someone who is sick or symptomatic should plan to stay home. (Please let us know if there is any way that we can assist you during your illness. We will continue to livestream Mass whenever possible for those who are unable to attend Mass in person.)
- Please wash your hands thoroughly.
- Face coverings or masks are required on our campus and during Mass. Please note that for children between ages 2 and 5, the wearing of a face covering or mask is at the discretion of the child's parent. Children under the age of 2 should not wear a face covering or mask.
- Please bring your own hand sanitizer that can be used before receiving Holy Communion. We have a limited supply of hand sanitizer available at the church and so it is imperative that parishioners bring their own.

- Please print or be sure to have available on your phone your confirmation email with your seat reservation(s).

### **Arriving for Mass**

- Face coverings or masks should be worn as soon as you exit your vehicle.
- The only entrance through which people will be allowed to enter for Mass is the handicapped entrance to the Parish Center located behind the church. This entrance will open 20 minutes prior to the start of Mass. Please maintain proper social distancing while waiting to enter the church. The pavement will be marked in order to help maintain social distancing. This process will allow for the easiest and safest entry for all our parishioners.
- Please be ready to show the attendant at the door your confirmation email with your seat reservation(s). The attendant will either collect your printed copy or scan it from your phone.
- Volunteer ushers will be happy to seat your household if you need assistance finding available seats.
- Some pews will be roped off in order to maintain social distancing. While we all have a preference for where we like to sit during Mass, we appreciate everyone cooperating in sitting in only the open pews.
- Please note, you may be sharing a pew with another household, but social distancing must be maintained between households (6 feet).
- The holy water fonts will remain empty. Hymnals and missalettes have been removed from the pews.
- Unfortunately, once the Mass begins we will not be able to accommodate late arrivals.

### **General Procedures for Mass**

- Please keep your face covering or mask on for the duration of Mass.
- There will be no congregational singing during the Mass with the exception of the Gospel Acclamation, Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, and Angus Dei.
- There is to be no physical contact between households or others at the Sign of Peace or hand holding during the Lord's Prayer.
- Baskets will not be passed during the offertory. Instead, you will be able to place your weekly gift in a basket as you enter/exit the church, but we strongly encourage online giving through our parish website: [www.stmaryuxbridge.org/give](http://www.stmaryuxbridge.org/give).

### **Procedures for Receiving Holy Communion**

- The Precious Blood will not be distributed to the congregation.
- The use of personal hand sanitizer before communion is strongly encouraged.
- In order to reduce any unnecessary risks while respecting the integrity of the Mass, **Holy Communion will be distributed at the conclusion of the Mass.** After the concluding blessing and the dismissal, the priest will remind you to remain in your seat. Then the priest will retrieve the hosts from the tabernacle and proceed to the places prepared for the distribution of Holy Communion.
- There will be 2 Communion stations: 1 at the head of the main aisle; and 1 at the opposite end of the main aisle. Those seated in pews in the front half of the church

will be invited forward to receive Holy Communion at the station at the head of the main aisle. Those seated in pews in the back half of the church will be invited to receive Holy Communion at the station at the opposite end of the main aisle (in the vestibule area). Volunteers will assist in ushering each pew to communion at the proper time. (Have no fear: The priest will give instructions as a reminder before distributing Holy Communion.)

- Masks should be worn while in the communion line. After you have received communion please step to the side, remove your mask, consume the Eucharist, and then re-mask.
- There is a “public health preference” that those who receive Holy Communion receive in the hand and not on the tongue.
- After receiving Holy Communion, please exit the church. Those who receive Holy Communion at the head of the aisle should exit via the Parish Center. Those who receive Holy Communion at the opposite end of the aisle in the vestibule should exit via the door to the parking lot.
- The main aisle will be marked with tape at 6 foot intervals to help maintain social distancing.

### **Leaving Mass**

- You must exit your pew when prompted. Unfortunately, private prayer is not available after Masses to allow the church to be prepared (cleaned) for the next Mass.
- The exit doors of the church will be latched open in order to avoid contact with door handles.
- You can drop your weekly offertory in the designated basket as you depart but we strongly encourage online giving through our parish website: [www.stmaryuxbridge.org/give](http://www.stmaryuxbridge.org/give).
- Please do not congregate outside but head directly to your vehicle to allow the next Mass to start on time.

### **Church Cleaning Procedures**

- We will continue to implement cleanliness and sanitization practices, including cleaning pews in between every Mass.
- Disinfecting bathrooms, door handles, and other frequently touched surfaces will occur throughout the day.
- Parish staff and volunteers will be required to wear face masks, wash hands regularly.

### **Other Considerations**

- You are reminded to follow CDC recommendations regarding your own health. If you fall into an “at risk” category, please stay home and join us by livestream on Facebook.
- Because older adults and those with underlying health conditions continue to be advised to avoid public assemblies, the suspension of the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays will remain in force until December 31, 2020.
- Saint Mary Church has been careful to observe the guidelines issued by government authorities and the Bishop of Worcester in the interest of the public health.