



Dear Parishioners,

On May 18, after nine weeks of social lockdown and isolation, Governor Baker announced a four phase plan to reopen Massachusetts. Fortunately, he has included houses of worship in the first phase and on the same day, Bishop McManus decreed that public Masses could resume on Saturday, May 23rd. While it seems a relief that we can again attend Mass, there are new directives with familiar restrictions that we need to abide by as we move forward. For a time, this means there will be some changes in the way that we can worship together.

The Bishop is following the guidelines to hold services as long as the attendance is within forty percent (40%) of the stated capacity for the building. That means that our church, with a capacity of 1200 people could hold 480 for a given Mass. Therefore, we are asking that all attendees enter the church through the side entrances so that we can assure the number attending is according to the guidelines. We are also asking everyone to keep a distance of six feet from one another, unless you are from the same household.

Ushers will be at the entrance of the church to give you instructions and answer any questions you may have. The doors will be wide open at the beginning and at the end of Mass so you don't have to have any contact with the doors. The ushers may also escort you to an available pew. Please be patient as you may be directed to a different pew than you are used to. This practice will help the volunteers to control the numbers and distance between people and also this will help us to know where to sanitize after Mass. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation. We will have hand sanitizing dispensers and wipes for your pew available at the entrances of our church. We ask you to disinfect your hands and pew as you enter.

Unless there is a medical reason not to, all attendees are required to wear a face covering or mask while entering, while inside, and exiting the building. When entering, leaving, and for communion, all attendees are asked to be conscious to socially distance the required six feet.

Missalettes will not be available in the pews. If you would like one, we will have missalettes available at the entrances. You are invited to take one as you enter the church and keep it and to take it home with you. This will be your personal missalette that should not be shared or left in the church. Bring the missalette with you for all Masses you may attend. Holy water fonts need to remain dry. Processions are suspended, including the entrance through the congregation, at offertory for the collection and bringing forward the gifts, and for the ministers leaving the sanctuary at the end of Mass. The sign of peace is not to be shared. Social gatherings before and after services are also not allowed.



The ushers will also assist when communion time comes. Please wait in your pew for their instruction. They will lead you to the communion line when is safe to do so. There will be one single file line in the center aisle only, for communion. Signs on the floor will help you to keep six feet apart from each other. As you get closer to receive communion, a table with hand sanitizer will be available for you, if you so choose. You may then remove your mask to receive Holy Communion. It is preferred that communion be received in the hand, with your hands flat and extended. Please replace your face mask as soon as you have placed the Holy Eucharist in your mouth.

Communicants who prefer to receive communion on the tongue are asked to please wait towards the end of the line to limit any risk of transmission and for the safety and reassurance of others who receive in the hand.

Baskets for collection envelopes will be available by the altar. However, all donations need to be quarantined before being counted to ensure the safety of parish staff and volunteers; thus, making your contribution electronically online would be a great help to all of our staff and a gesture of caring for their health and safety as well. For more information on this option, please go to our website or contact the Rectory. We will also be sanitizing the worship area, doorknobs, and bathrooms after each service.

We would like to thank all those parishioners that have already reached out to volunteer, however, we need more help. Our goal is to bring back our regular Mass schedule, but it will be very difficult without more volunteers to help us to fulfill the guidelines. Please consider calling the Rectory if you are willing to help. All you will need to do is to arrive 15 minutes before the Mass you usually attend and stay a little longer afterwards. Training will be offered to you.

There are many challenges and we are working to address them all. Please realize the most important part of all of this is to keep us healthy and safe. If you have a compromised medical condition, or are unsure in any way, please be at peace to stay home or to come to a weekday Mass, we will continue to live stream our 4pm Mass on Saturday on Facebook.

Thank you very much.

*Fr. Mateus Souza*