

What to Expect When You Return to Saint Simon Expanded

It is extremely exciting to be returning to Saint Simon for Sunday Mass! We return as people who have been and continue to be changed by the global pandemic. In the midst of it all we have lifted one another up in prayer and it is good to be able to gather together to pray once again.

Let us be mindful for all those who have suffered losses. Let us be especially mindful to lift in prayer those who have died and those who mourn their passing.

We are doing our best and learning each day. The following procedures will be modified as needed. We will continue to update you.

Personal Safety / Risk Tolerance

We know that every person has a different level of comfort when it comes to risk. If you are not comfortable returning to Mass at this time, please do not feel any rush to return. Archbishop Thompson has extended the dispensation from the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass until August 15, 2020.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, our goal is to help each other get to heaven but there is no need to rush it. If you are in a high-risk category (65 or older and/or have medical conditions) you are highly encouraged to continue to join Mass online.

As always, if you are sick or experiencing symptoms of sickness, remember you are not obliged to attend Sunday Mass and out of charity for the rest of the community you ought not attend. If you have tested positive for the coronavirus, please do not attend Mass until you have been cleared by your doctor.

At Saint Simon we have worked hard to keep our campus clean and will continue to do so. Even with those efforts, every individual must understand that you are assuming some risk in returning to Saint Simon.

The coronavirus is still active and it is not always immediately clear that someone has contracted it and studies show many people contract the coronavirus and never show symptoms.

We are ready to greet you when you are ready.

The last thing we want is for you to feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at Saint Simon.

The Journey through Mass

Mass Preparation

As you prepare to return to Mass, ask yourself, “Am I ready?” Are you sick or in a high-risk category? Are you uncomfortable knowing that even though we are cleaning as best we can, we have not totally eliminated the coronavirus? If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions please continue to be patient and wait to return to Mass in person.

If you are healthy and ready to return to Mass, you should wear a mask. We understand that this can be a divisive issue and while we appreciate that some do not want to wear a mask we hope that you would do so for the time being to help others feel comfortable at Mass.

Entering

Please be conscious of social distancing from the moment you park your car. Allow for separation as you enter the building. When you come inside please remember to have your mask on and use hand sanitizer. We will have some hand sanitizer available but we ask for you to bring and use your own. Church supply could become depleted quickly. You will notice the greeters will be wearing gloves and will be distributing the bulletin after Mass.

Building Changes

You will notice several building changes. The nursery is temporarily closed and the cry room has been converted to a temporary confessional. This provides more space for the priest and the penitent than our regular confessional. We love children and understand that they are sometimes fussy. Parents, please feel free to use the narthex if you feel it necessary to temporarily remove a fussy child.

You will also notice that there is no holy water in the holy water font. You can arrange to fill a personal bottle with holy water for your use. Pews are roped off to allow for physical distancing. We know that many families have pews that they traditionally sit in. If the pew you traditionally sit in is roped off please understand that this is temporary and exercise restraint from sitting in your regular pew. You will also notice that the hymnals and other cards have been removed. This is to allow for the cleaning crew to thoroughly and efficiently clean the pews and kneelers. This also reduces the potential risk of transmission of bacteria and viruses. We will be using the projectors for songs and responses. You are also welcome to bring (and take home) your own prayer book. You can even find the readings by using your smart phone. The donation baskets will be at the entrance of church. You are encouraged to make your Sunday offering as you enter or

exit church. This might be a good time for you to consider signing up for our online giving platform Faith Direct.

Mass Changes

There won't be any altar servers for the time being. However, we will have seminary students assisting with Mass. There will only be one lector for each Mass and singing will be done at the cantor stand. This will reduce the number of people at the ambo. The gifts will not be brought forward, nor will the collection basket be passed around at this time. We won't be holding hands outside of your household during the Our Father. We also ask that you refrain from exchanging a physical sign of peace, outside your household. Smiling eyes, a wave, a nod or bow are all ways to communicate to each other a sign of peace.

Reception of Holy Communion

As the focal point of Mass, the most incredible part is physically receiving the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ present in the Most Holy Eucharist into our bodies. It is the part of the Mass that is temporarily changing the most. As always, those who are aware of mortal sin should refrain from receiving Holy Communion until they are able to make a good Confession. Please understand and be aware that you are assuming some risk in coming forward for Holy Communion. It is completely acceptable to attend Mass and make a Spiritual Communion. You are welcome to come up to the altar with your arms crossed to receive a contact-free blessing. The chalice is temporarily suspended. If you are not coming up, we do ask your help allowing for others to continue physical separation as they come up to receive Holy Communion. Please exit the pew so that people don't brush up against you.

Circulation to receive Holy Communion

All pews will circulate counter clockwise to the altar up the nearest aisle. Each section will circulate right (south) to the nearest aisle then proceed towards the altar. You will return to the pews in the same counter clockwise direction returning to the pews to the left (north) side. This circulation allows for people to pass each other but not stand stationary next to each other.

As you come to receive Holy Communion, use the tape on the floor as a guide for separation for people outside of your household. If you need to help someone in your household down the aisle please do so still using the tape as a guide. If you are sitting at the end of the pew please scoot in a bit to allow for folks who use the pews to support themselves to stand safely away from you.

As you receive Holy Communion, the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist will be wearing masks and will have just put on hand sanitizer. They will place the Eucharist into your hands. If you are not receiving Holy Communion they will give you a contact-free blessing if you cross your arms.

Those wishing to receive Holy Communion on the tongue must receive from Father Doug and are asked to wait to receive until all those receiving in the hand have done so. You are encouraged to sit near the back of church for the ease of circulation.

Exiting Mass

As Mass ends, give adequate physical space with each other as you exit. Gather all items from the pew and depart promptly to allow for the cleaning crew to clean between Masses. In general it is wonderful to spend time in prayer after the Holy Mass and normally you would be encouraged to stay in the church to pray. However, with the additional cleaning measures we hope you will understand our request and exit the church promptly following Mass. The Men's Club has volunteered to spray and wipe down the pews between Masses and they need your help to make sure that everything you bring into the Mass leaves with you.

We know that we have missed each other. If you want to visit, please do so outside maintaining social distancing and leave plenty of room for others to exit. The greeters will continue to distribute the bulletins and will help to remind you to keep the doorways clear.

Until further notice coffee and donuts are suspended.