

Guide for Participation in Public Celebration of Mass during the Pandemic St. Teresa of Avila, Washington, DC

As we gather to celebrate the Eucharist in person again, we look forward to doing so safely and joyfully. Please review the guidelines below for in-person Mass.

Even with the resumption of public liturgies, please be aware that the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation remains in effect. Parishioners who are particularly vulnerable (e.g., over the age of 60, those who have been medically diagnosed with serious underlying health conditions: high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised, heart or lung conditions, or who are immune compromised), and those who are ill or suspect they may be ill, should remain at home.

Livestream Sunday Mass on our [YouTube](#) and [Facebook Live](#) channels will continue, with Mass beginning at 9:30am.

- 1. Social distancing while entering and while in the church building is required**, with approximately 6 feet of separation between persons, except for members of the same family or household within the same pew. Social distancing will reduce the numbers of the faithful that can be accommodated in the building. As of March 17, 2021, the updated maximum capacity of indoor gatherings has been set to 50 persons. The limit will continue to increase as guidelines are relaxed. To comply, every other pew will be roped/taped off. Subject to the exception for members of the same family or household, pews will seat up to three persons each. **Once we reach our capacity of 50, additional worshippers will not be able to enter the church, however there will be an outdoor Mass at 12:00pm held at the Parish Life Center, weather permitting, each Sunday with no capacity restrictions.**

Additional Preparations and Precautions

2. Worshippers are asked to wear a face mask and to keep it on during Mass, removing it only to receive Holy Communion, as explained in bullet #17 and replacing it afterward. Hymnals, missalettes, and holy water have been removed from the church building. All other materials in the pew racks have been removed as well.
3. **Hand sanitizers will be available as you enter the church as well as in Communion lines, in both cases offered by the Ministers of Hospitality.**

4. Doors will be propped open promptly at 9:05am before and after Mass to avoid unnecessary contact with door handles and to increase ventilation. **The door at the main entrance will be used for entry, and the side doors on both sides of the church (if available) will be opened and available for exit.** DOORS WILL CLOSE ONCE MASS BEGINS AND NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE SANCTUARY.
5. **It is highly recommended that you visit restroom facilities prior to leaving home, however, if you require access to the restroom during Mass please see one of the Ministers of Hospitality.**
6. The number of liturgical ministers present at Mass may be limited, except for Ministers of Hospitality who assist with seating, Communion, and departure.
7. The following additional precautions that were put in place prior to the suspension of public Masses remain in place: **priests and other Eucharistic ministers will use hand sanitizer to cleanse hands before and after Holy Communion**; there will be no distribution of the Precious Blood; Eucharistic vessels will be washed with hot water and soap after each use; and there will be no Offertory procession.
8. **There will be no passing of the basket at the Offertory.** In lieu of the Offertory process and passing of the basket, we ask you to first consider using the on-line methods available below. If you prefer to leave your donation, there will be baskets for Offertory donations as you leave, at the side doors. Below are the three optional methods to give tithes and love offerings:
 - **Mobile Device:** Text **staChurch** to 77977, click the link and follow the prompts.
 - Visit www.stachurchdc.org and click on **“Tithes and Love Offerings”**.
 - **The PLC** - 1401 V Street, SE, Washington DC 20020, Drop in the secured mailbox.
9. We ask that you immediately exit the building when Mass is over, without talking or gathering in any groups so that the sanitation crew can begin work.
10. Pews and other surfaces will be sanitized before and after Mass. **The church will be closed to the public during sanitizing.**

Please prepare yourself and your family before making reservations to attend Mass in public.

11. You can find daily and Sunday Mass readings online at www.usccb.org and on our website homepage at www.stachurchdc.org.

Participating at Mass

12. As applicable, parishioners with confirmed reservations will line up outside of the church along 12th and V Streets, SE adhering to 6 ft apart social distancing guidelines. You will be directed by assigned Minister(s) of Hospitality to enter the building, and as you enter, you will **have your temperature taken** by one of the assigned volunteers and be required to answer the COVID-19 screening questions.
13. You will also be asked to **sanitize your hands before taking a seat. Hand sanitizer will be provided.** Please follow the direction of the Ministers of Hospitality and fill in seats from the front pews (near the sanctuary) to the back.
14. We will not encourage congregational singing unless with a mask.
15. The following precautions for worshippers that applied prior to the suspension of public Masses remain in place: **please refrain from shaking hands during the Sign of Peace** (the invitation to exchange a sign of peace is now omitted); and refrain from holding hands during the Lord's Prayer.
16. Those who do not wish to receive Communion may make an **Act of Spiritual Communion.**
17. **For the Communion procession, please follow the direction of the Ministers of Hospitality.** Always remain 6 feet behind the person in front of you. Follow the markers on the floor. As you approach the eucharistic minister or priest, keep the mask on, extend your hand, and remain at a safe distance. After the Archbishop, Pastor or Eucharistic Minister says, "The Body of Christ," and you respond, "Amen," then receive the host in your hand. Step a few feet away from the minister, loosen your mask, consume the host, and replace the facial covering. Then return to your pew.
18. Communion will only be distributed in the hand. Out of love for our brothers and sisters, and out of kind concern for the vulnerable and our Eucharistic Ministers, **those who normally receive on the tongue are**

respectfully asked to consider receiving in the hand as a temporary measure.

19. **Dismissal will be pew by pew.** The pews in the back of church will begin (closest to the side doors) as signaled by the Ministers of Hospitality and ending with the front pews. Exit through the front door or side doors if available, **AND REFRAIN FROM SOCIALIZING.** Please follow the directions of the Ministers of Hospitality. **Offering donations may also be made as you depart.** Please exit promptly so we may begin sanitizing the church. Bulletins will not be distributed; please see our website for the latest news and information (www.stachurchdc.org). **Monsignor East and Deacon Bill will not be able to greet you as you leave. As you leave, please remember to keep socially distanced from other persons.**

Thank you for helping to keep everyone safe during our liturgy!