



Returning to normal liturgical practices

EFFECTIVE MAY 7, 2021

In light of the updated health guidelines by the Governor and the Rhode Island Department of Health, the following liturgical & sacramental practices are to be reinstated. In order to facilitate a more welcoming environment, pastors are asked to make the additional effort to avoid any unnecessary social restrictions on the faithful.

Indoor seating capacity is increased from 75% to 80%. Additionally, physical (social) distancing is reduced from 6 feet to 3 feet. Therefore, any previously "roped off" pews can be made available once again.

The practice of making a reservation or to have tickets should cease.

Markings, tape, plexiglass, and other signage related to COVID restrictions should be removed.

Ministers serving in the sacred liturgy, especially the priest celebrant, are not required to use a face mask.

Greater participation should be encouraged once again in the Sacred Liturgy, especially at Holy Mass on Sundays. Regular weekday Mass schedules can resume.

The following should be reintroduced at this time:

- Liturgical processions to and from the altar; Entrance, Offertory and Recessional.
- The use of hymnals and other worship aids can be placed in the pew.
- Congregational singing should be encouraged along with choirs keeping in mind the recommended physical distancing set forth by the RI Department of Health.
- Holy Water fonts may be filled at the entrances of the Church.
- The passing of the basket at the time of the offertory should resume. This should be carried out by an usher and not by a collection plate from one person to another in order to limit unnecessary contact.

- The admonition to “offer the sign of peace” may be given. The “sign” can be given without physical contact but should simply be done verbally.
- The participation and presence of altar servers, readers, and if necessary extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is encouraged.
- The distribution of Holy Communion should take place according to the norms in the Roman Missal and not after the final blessing.
- The lay faithful should be reminded that they may receive Holy Communion either on the hand or on the tongue.
- Proper cleaning and normal sanitization practices should be carried out. The use of harsh chemicals on the pews or the sanitization of the church after every Mass is not necessary.

Pastors should continue to observe the following within their parish at this time.

- Sufficient hand sanitizing dispensers should be made available at the vestibule of the church which can be used by parishioners upon entering.
- The use of a face mask is still required while indoors for large gatherings. However, it may be omitted for reasons of health.
- Proper hand hygiene is encouraged, especially at the time of Holy Communion.
- The distribution of the Precious Blood at Holy Communion to the lay faithful should remain suspended.
- Allow for proper ventilation for increased airflow and HVAC filtration when possible.
- Avoid unnecessary crowding at the entrances of the church and in the aisles whenever possible.
- Parishioners should be encouraged to maintain the recommended physical distance between each other with the exception for members of the same household while seated in the pews.