

PARISH LIFE

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Faithful Parishioners and Friends,

PENDING THE GOVERNOR'S LIFTING OF THE STAY AT HOME ORDER, Bishop Michael Duca has granted permission to begin the gradual reopening of public Masses and Confessions. For now, Masses will be limited to 25% capacity across the Diocese for each Parish.

However, there is no obligation to attend Sunday Mass or Holy Days of Obligation in the Diocese of Baton Rouge at this time. You are reminded to follow CDC Recommendations regarding your own health. If you fall into an "at risk" category, or you are uncomfortable being in public at this time, please stay home and join us for Mass on line or television.

THE FIRST PUBLIC MASS AT OUR LADY OF MERCY WILL BE THE 4:00 pm VIGIL MASS ON SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2020.

Our Lady of Mercy will return to our regular Mass schedule on Saturday, May 16, 2020.

CONFESSIONS will be available in the Parish Activity Center in the St. Gabriel Room beginning Monday, May 18, 2020 from 7:00 am to 7:45 am (before 8:00 am weekday Morning Mass) and from 11:00 am to 11:45 am (before 12:00 Noon weekday Mass). On Tuesdays, CONFESSIONS will be heard from 5:00 pm to 5:45 pm (before 6:00 pm Mass). Saturday CONFESSIONS in the St. Gabriel Room in the Parish Activity Center from 3:00 pm to 3:45 pm (before 4:00 pm Vigil Mass) and from 5:00 pm to 5:45 pm (before 6:00 pm Vigil Mass). Please note this is to comply with social distancing guidelines. MASKS ARE REQUIRED.

The Church is open every day from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm for private prayer. Social distancing is required.

This is part of Phase 1 of our parish reopening and there are many new protocols that all parishioners must follow to attend Mass. These procedures will be reevaluated weekly. If you would like to attend Mass, please read these instructions thoroughly on our website.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Face Masks are required on our campus for the duration of Mass (this includes children). Bring your own hand sanitizer.

Please do not bring items that contain bleach into the Church as this will damage the pews.



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ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Face Masks should be worn as soon as you exit your vehicle.

Please enter the Church from the marked main doors facing Marquette Avenue. Do not enter Church until the previous Mass has ended. Staff and Ushers will assist you. The capacity in Church is 25% on a "first-come-first-serve" basis - 250 people. Places for seating are designated in green, marked by 6 feet social distancing. Families may sit together. There must be an empty pew between seated parishioners. These pews are marked in red in which no one is allowed to be seated. Please be patient in understanding that during this period you may not be able to sit where you normally do. You are encouraged to be seated from the front to the back. When the Church is filled to 25% capacity, you will be directed to the Parish Activity Center or you may return and remain in your vehicle. At the time of Holy Communion, the Eucharist will be brought to the Parish Activity Center and will also be brought to a designated place under the drive-through on the side of Church to be distributed to those coming from their cars.

Once again, please be mindful of social distancing.

The Holy Water Fonts will remain empty.

The Adoration Chapel remains closed.

MASS PROCEDURES

Please keep your face mask on for the duration of Mass.

There will be no Altar Servers or Choir.

There is to be no physical contact at the Sign of Peace or hand holding during the Lord's Prayer.

The gifts of bread and wine will not be processed.

Baskets will be placed in Church for your Offertory. We strongly encourage that you consider online giving.

COMMUNION PROCEDURES

Bishop Duca has recommended that Holy Communion be received in the hand at this time.

The Precious Blood will not be offered to the Congregation.

There will be a single Communion line in the center of designated aisles.

Staff ushers will assist you.

The procedure for the procession to receive Communion will abide by the 6 feet distancing between each person in line.

Facial Masks must be worn in the Communion line.

After you have received Holy Communion, please step to the side, remove your Mask, consume the Eucharist, and then re-mask as you return to your pew.

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DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Please do not congregate in any area after Mass has ended.

When exiting the Church, please allow for social distancing.

It is preferred that pews be dismissed in an orderly fashion starting in the rear of Church and then moving forward.

Clergy will not shake hands.

You may dispose of your Face Mask in the garbage at your home.

CHURCH CLEANING PROCEDURES

We will continue to implement cleanliness and sanitization practices, including disinfecting pews between every Mass.

Disinfecting bathrooms, door handles, and other frequently touched surfaces occur throughout the day and after each Mass.

PARISH OFFICE BUILDING AND OLOM CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

The Parish Office will be open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

All meetings, as well as organizational and ministerial activities remain suspended until further notice.

Funeral and wedding protocols remain in effect.

Additional information will be forthcoming as well as plans for First Communion, reception of RCIA Candidates into Full Communion, etc.

I am deeply grateful for your patience, understanding, and courteous cooperation as we begin these first steps of gathering for prayer and worship as a Church family. I know that I can count on you! Please remember no one will be turned away from Our Lady of Mercy. However, when the Church is 25% full, the two options are going to the Parish Activity Center to receive Communion or waiting in your vehicles for Holy Communion to be brought to the designated place under the drive through.

May God grant us His loving protection during this time of healing and transition.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
FATHER CLEO J. MILANO, Pastor
Our Lady of Mercy Church