

St. Thomas More Parish
General Information for the Resumption of Public Mass Beginning Saturday June 6

The dispensation of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been extended till at least June 28. Everyone should exercise caution and make their own prudential judgment about whether they should attend Mass at this time. Parents should give careful consideration to whether small children should be brought to Mass if it would be difficult for them to wear a mask and/or maintain safe distancing.

Anyone who is ill or whose health would be compromised by attending Mass is always dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass. The same dispensation would apply to anyone who is a caregiver for someone with a medically compromising condition or anyone who lives with or has regular contact with medically fragile persons.

ANYONE WHO IS ILL SHOULD NOT COME TO MASS. If your temperature is 99.6 or greater, you should stay home. One should also stay home if they have experienced any of the symptoms that are associated with Covid-19: cough, shortness of breath, chills, and/or loss of taste/smell. This is to protect you and everyone who comes in contact with you. We will continue to live-stream Masses for those who are unable to join us in person.

To provide adequate time for our staff to clean the church before reopening and before each Mass, beginning Monday, June 1, our Mass schedule is as follows:

Monday through Friday – 12:15 PM (only)
Saturday – 5:30 PM (vigil for Sunday)
Sunday – 9:00 AM, 11:30 AM, 5:30 PM

All Masses will be in the Main Church
Please note the changes in Mass times

Please consider coming to a weekday Mass rather than a Sunday Mass if your schedule permits. This schedule is subject to change as circumstances warrant.

In order to maintain a clean environment, especially for Masses, the Church building will be closed except for 15 minutes prior to until 15 minutes after any scheduled Mass or other service. Thus, for now, the chapel is not available for private prayer. For the safety of our parish staff, the office will remain closed for now. But all staff members can be reached by e-mail or telephone.

When coming to Mass on Saturday and Sunday, for the well-being of all, please follow the directions of designated guides/ushers. They have been trained to encourage adherence to archdiocesan and parish guidelines. As conditions warrant, these protocols will be relaxed or tightened.

Confession will be available on Saturdays from 4 to 5 PM and by appointment. At the priest's discretion, the Sacrament will be celebrated in either the chapel or the family room. Both the priest and the penitent must wear a mask; they must be at least six feet apart; and they should not be face-to-face. There should be no 'lining-up' for Confession. Anyone waiting to celebrate the Sacrament should sit in the narthex at a distance, and they should not approach the small chapel or the family room until the previous penitent has moved six feet away from the door. This is to maintain the confidentiality of the sacrament as well as safe distancing.

Coming to Mass at STM Information for Parishioners

- All parishioners are expected to wear a face mask at all times.
- If you bring personal sanitizer with you, do not bring anything that contains bleach as this will damage the pews. You should sanitize your hands before and after touching any surface. Pew surfaces will be sanitized before and after each Mass.
- The restrooms and water fountains are for emergencies only. It is virtually impossible to maintain safe distancing in restrooms or to clean the restrooms between every person.
- Parishioners should use SignUpGenius through the parish website to reserve a place for a Sunday (weekend) Mass. Reservations are not needed at this time for daily (Monday to Friday) Mass. Reservations can only be made for the following weekend beginning on Monday of each week. If you have not signed up, do not come to the church hoping that room will be available.
- If you are unable to use SignUpGenius, you may call the parish office during normal business hours; and our administrative staff will sign you up as space is available.
- You must arrive at STM at least five minutes before the scheduled beginning of Mass; otherwise, your place may be given to someone else. If you come to the church without having reserved a place, you will be asked to wait until those with reservations have been seated.
- When you arrive at STM, sanitize your hands at the first opportunity and follow the directions of the guides who are stationed near the entrances for your safety and well-being. You may enter the building through the glass doors facing Ponce de Leon or through the glass door in the courtyard just beyond Mulhearn Hall. Only use doors that have been propped open for your safety.
- You may enter the church proper ONLY through the center metal doors. This is to ensure that we do not exceed the mandated capacity limits. If you are informed that capacity has already been reached, please graciously accept the alternatives proposed by the guides even if the only option is to return for another Mass.
- After entering the church proper, please drop any contribution you wish to make into the basket; contributions may also be placed in the basket as you leave church. There will be no collection taken up during Mass. Envelopes for second collections may be placed in the same basket.
- Alert one of the guides if you have mobility issues that will make it hard for you to go up the aisle for Communion; the guide, in turn, will alert the priest, letting him know where you will be sitting.
- If you have brought a pyx containing a low gluten host, you may place it on the altar as you are being seated; or you may give it to the priest if you see him. Please note that you should take the pyx to the altar via the center aisle and then return to your pew via the side aisle.
- Following the directions of the guides and using the center aisle only, you will be seated from front to back in the church. You will not be able to select a particular pew or seat. Do not attempt to sit in any pew that has been taped off.
- There are no hymnals or any other material in the pews; this is for your safety. Pay it forward by leaving nothing behind in the pews when you leave.
- At the current time, congregational singing is discouraged. You should still keep your mask on throughout Mass and hum along with the cantor.
- At Communion time, remain in your pew until the guide directs you to come out and to go forward. We ask that everyone in the pew come forward even if you won't be receiving Communion. This is to avoid people having to crawl over one another. Everyone will move in the same direction: moving toward the altar by the center aisle in a single line and returning by of the side aisles.
- As you approach the priest or the minister for Communion, you and they will be wearing masks. Wait until the person ahead of you has had a chance to move away from the priest/minister. Then

approach the priest/minister with an outstretched palm. If your palm is not outstretched, the priest/minister will presume that you prefer to receive a blessing; and they will offer one without touching you. If you do not desire Communion or a blessing, simply turn before you get to the priest/minister and return to your seat by the side aisle. The priest/minister will put the host on your outstretched palm without actually touching your hand. Do not try to take the host from the priest/minister; if your hands touch, the priest/minister will need to stop and re-sanitize their hands. Since a mask must be worn throughout Mass, it is only possible to distribute Communion on the hand at this time for the health and well-being of everyone. After receiving the host on your outstretched palm, step to the side, six feet away from the priest/minister, remove your mask, consume the Body of Christ, and then put your mask back on before returning to your pew.

- At the end of Mass, exit the church and the building using all of the aisles and exits, while still maintaining safe distancing. Give others time to move away before entering the aisle. When you get to the exit, keep moving. Do not congregate in the church or the narthex, before or after Mass. Weather permitting, the priest, wearing a mask, will be available to greet you just outside the front doors of the building. Be sure to keep your mask on until you get in your car or are well away from other people.