



THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL

Dear Cathedral Parishioners and Friends:

May 14, 2020

Further to my letter of Monday, May 11 (which is appended below), I would like to share some additional information about our Masses, now that public worship has been permitted to resume and I have had further time to consider what adjustments we will need to make here at the Cathedral of Saint Paul.

- **ADDITIONAL MASS:** Starting this weekend, there will be an additional recited Mass on Sundays at 7:15am, so that we can be sure there is enough space for everyone at all Masses, given current seating restrictions. Please consider the 5:00pm Saturday Mass also, which typically has a smaller crowd. Note well that this additional Mass is a *temporary measure*, due to our current situation of limitations. Once we can use all our pews again, I will consider the return to our former schedule.
- **RECEIVING COMMUNION:** To respond to concerns about the method of receiving Holy Communion, I have decided that the deacons will distribute *in the hand only*, and the priest celebrant will distribute *on the tongue only*. The ushers will assist us with an altered pattern for the communion procession that will enable each communicant to make his or her choice and traffic to flow well (pews on the Mary side first, pews on the Joseph side after, etc.). It will be easiest to explain this pattern at Mass, which I will do. Please be attentive to the indications of the ushers!
- **CHOIR/MUSIC AT 11:00AM:** A smaller ensemble comprised of our choir members will sing at the 11:00am Mass, maintaining appropriate distance in the choir loft. Their singing will surely enhance our prayer and continue to distinguish our 11:00am Sunday Mass as the more solemn of our weekly liturgies. However, there will not be any congregational singing at any of our Masses until I determine that it is appropriate for us to resume doing so, in consultation with our Bishop.
- **AVOID CROWDING:** Please remember, as you enter and as you leave from Mass, as with the communion line, always to try to maintain space between parties. It will be especially important not to rush out at the end of Mass, lest we end up with a “bottleneck” situation. Masses will be briefer anyhow, so please be sure to stay some moments to say your prayers of thanksgiving, waiting a bit to leave so that we can avoid any and all crowding of the doors.
- **LIVESTREAMED MASS:** Through Sunday, June 21, I will continue to livestream the 8:30am Sunday Mass on our Cathedral Facebook page – <http://www.facebook.com/stpaulsbhm>. Because of technical limitations with the camera microphone, I will read all the readings. Our lectors and deacons will assist with the readings, as usual, at all our other Masses.
- **OFFERTORY:** A reminder that a “ballot box”-style receptacle will be at the baptismal font and at the side entrance, for you to leave your offertory gifts as you enter or as you leave. A collection will not be taken up during Mass, to limit risk of contagion. Thank you for your generous support!
- **ORDER OF WORSHIP:** A reminder, also, that the missalettes have been removed from the pews. The bulletin, which will be available at the entrances, has the readings, Gloria, Creed, and 11:00am Mass propers on the *back page*. If you take a bulletin, take it with you as you leave. As an alternative to taking a paper bulletin, you can download it on our web site and follow along on your phone.
- **PRAYER AT THE END OF MASS:** Following Bishop Baker’s directives (below), we will pray the Hail Holy Queen at the conclusion of Masses through June 30, for the intentions he indicated.

I look forward to seeing all who come to the Saturday 5:00pm or Sunday 7:15am/8:30am/11:00am Masses. If you are not ready to return, feel sick, or otherwise have concerns about risk for yourself or others, *please stay home*. We will get through this with God’s help and a healthy dose of patience! God bless you!

 – Fr. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L., Pastor & Rector



THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL

May 11, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends of the Cathedral:

I am pleased to share the news that Bishop Baker has authorized all of our churches to begin holding public worship again, following upon Governor Ivey's amended "Safer at Home" directives. We will follow the bishop's indications (his letter follows below), taking special precautions for public safety and health.

I am well aware of the fact that this news will not be welcomed by all. However, please know that the obligation to attend Masses remains dispensed. Those who wish to resume coming to Mass may do so; those who are not yet ready for any reason, may wait longer.

Our first public Mass will be at 12:10pm on Wednesday, May 13, celebrated by Father Altonji. Confessions will be offered at 11:30am, as usual. From Thursday, we will resume our full regular daily schedule. However, the following variations and precautions will be in place:

- Those who feel sick should stay home; because of the general dispensation, there is no obligation at this time to attend Mass, so there is no sin if you stay home for any reason.
- **Confessions will continue to be on the front porch of the rectory – rain or shine.**
- Every other pew will be cordoned-off in church, for front-to-back distancing. Within pews, individuals or family units should keep at least six feet of distance side-to-side with others. Those with small children should try to sit near the ends of rows, so that they may step out more easily if a child should become agitated.
- **The wearing of masks and gloves is permitted, but both must be removed for communion.**
- The entrance-area restrooms will continue to be available, but you are encouraged (as always) to "go before leaving the house"!
- **Through the end of May, we will not sing at the Saturday 5:00pm and Sunday 8:30am Masses; there will be organ accompaniment. The Sunday 11:00am Mass will have choral music provided by a small ensemble of staff singers, who will maintain social distance in the choir loft, but there will be no congregational singing. I will assess whether the time is right to re-introduce our usual music program after Pentecost.**
- The sign of peace will be omitted and communion will be under the form of the Host only at all Masses.
- **We do not have a large supply of hand sanitizer. Each family or individual should bring their own if they desire to use it. It is starting to re-appear in stores.**
- The pew bookracks and card holders will be emptied. We will have single-use bulletins/worship aids that will include the readings and the texts of Mass for Sunday and Solemnity Masses. Please take one as you enter and *take it with you when you leave*. Of course, those who have monthly publications (like *Magnificat*) or personal hand missals may wish to use those instead to follow along with the readings and responses.

- **There will be no collection taken up by ushers until such time as we are able to procure baskets that are on poles. Until then, at each Sunday Mass, there will be receptacles placed – one by the baptismal font and one by the side entrance – where you may deposit your offertory donations either upon arrival or as you leave. Thank you for your gift! (And please remember that we offer e-giving at <http://stpaulsbhm.churchgiving.com>.)**
- There will not be a procession of the gifts of bread and wine at the offertory.
- **At communion time, all may approach in the usual way, whether to receive communion or a blessing. We are all reminded that it is not required to receive Holy Communion at every Mass we attend – the minimum is once per year; more often is certainly recommended, but may not always be advisable. Such is especially the case when a person is not spiritually disposed to receive (i.e., we are to approach communion in the state of grace and having fasted for one hour before receiving).**
- In the communion line, please maintain six feet of distance from the person in front of you, if they are not part of your group.
- **Let us be careful about making assumptions about other people’s comfort levels – even if they are friends or long-time “pew mates” or other. We do not always know the anxiety or fear that another may have, or perhaps even a health concern. We should all strive to follow the recommended protocols and ask permission if we wish to break with them.**
- That said, there is also no way that Cathedral ministers, staff, or volunteers can reasonably enforce all protocols. Besides, we all need to be responsible adults, being especially attentive to children, who may not understand the changes that we must make. If at any time you feel uncomfortable because of someone else, consider charitably and calmly getting up and moving.

Our parish office will re-open on Monday, May 18. You may continue to reach us through email and phone also.

As has been the case throughout this entire time of pandemic, we will regularly review all policies and provisions and determine if any changes are needed. I will promptly communicate such changes with you.

I know that not all of you will feel comfortable coming to Mass this Sunday or before – or you may prudently need to stay away for another reason. Be at peace, and know that I am praying for you and yours. Please pray for me – and let me know if there is any way that I can be of service.

With gratitude for your ongoing support and understanding, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Very Reverend Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
Pastor & Rector



Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

Post Office Box 12047
Birmingham, Alabama 35202-2047

2121 Third Avenue North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203
Telephone: 205-838-8322
Fax: 205-836-1910

Office of the Bishop

May 11, 2020

Dear Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious, Seminarians, and All Faithful People of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama:

The Lord is risen! Indeed He is risen! Alleluia!

I wish to commend and thank you for your faith and patience during the suspension of public worship that we have observed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While there is still some cause for concern and it is important that we continue to be careful, it also seems opportune for us to begin the process of re-opening – now also permitted by State and local authorities.

With this letter, therefore, I wish to accomplish three goals: **1.** Provide guidelines for the restoration of public worship; **2.** Issue a new dispensation for the Mass obligation (replacing the previous one of March 13, 2020); **3.** Ask that certain prayers be said during public worship.

Guidelines for the Restoration of Public Worship

I hereby declare that Pastors and Administrators of the Diocese are permitted to restore public worship in their parishes beginning on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 – the Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima. This declaration is subject to the following qualifications:

- Pastors and Administrators are permitted and even encouraged to hold outdoor Masses, especially in parishes where the church building has low ceilings or does not have good air circulation.
- Pastors and Administrators should review the safety guidelines and protocols recommended by the Alabama Department of Public Health (accessible at <https://alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/assets/cov-sah-worship.pdf>), to include details like using every other row of pews and encouraging safe distancing between family units.
- Pastors and Administrators may also wish to review the paper circulated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which includes recommendations for the re-opening process (accessible via <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>).
- The physical exchange of the sign of peace at liturgies should continue to be omitted, allowing for the possibility of a simple bow, at the discretion of the celebrant.
- Communion should be distributed to the faithful under the form of the Host only, recalling that Christ is present whole and entire even under only one form.

- Those who wish to wear face masks to church must lower them *before* receiving Holy Communion, in order to avoid any accidents.
- Gloves may never be used in the distribution of Holy Communion; neither should the faithful receive communion in gloved hands – gloves must be removed before receiving.
- Holy water fonts should continue to remain empty; holy water tanks/dispensers (for people to fill their own bottles) can and should remain available so that the faithful may not be deprived of this important sacramental for their private use.
- I verify that the “grave reason” mentioned in canon 1000 § 2 of the *Code of Canon Law* for the use of an “instrument” for the Anointing of the Sick remains. Therefore, whenever a priest deems it opportune to use a cotton ball or swab to anoint a person who has begun to be in danger of death due to sickness or old age, he may do so, dipping it only once in the Oil of the Sick and then disposing of it reverently by burning and burial afterwards.
- Priests should continue offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Penance, but with “social distancing” protocols and precautions (e.g., outdoors or in large rooms, always careful to safeguard privacy), until we determine that it is safe to return to the use of regular confessionals or reconciliation rooms.
- Baptism should not be delayed. Priests and deacons should strive to maintain social distancing while celebrating it. The anointing with the Oil of Catechumens may be omitted (as the rubrics indicate); the anointing with the Oil of Chrism may be done with a cotton ball or swab instead of with the thumb, if desired. It would be best not to schedule baptisms of multiple children, but to celebrate each one distinctly. However, in cases where they do take place, it is recommended to have the blessed water in a separate bowl or pitcher and for the font to be empty; the water may be poured over the head into the font, such that each person receives fresh water and what ends up in the font does not get reused.
- Pastors and Administrators should encourage e-Giving; they may also wish to have ushers use collection baskets with handles or ask the faithful to deposit their donations in baskets at collection points, instead of passing baskets around and so, risking contagion.
- Consider seriously the option of outdoor Masses for those areas of the Diocese where the number of COVID-19 cases remains high, the risk of infection is great, and where there is sufficient space on church property to do so.

I otherwise leave it up to the discretion of Pastors and Administrators to determine the best ways to re-start public worship in their parishes while avoiding any extremes, and respecting sound sacramental theology and Church law. Do not hesitate to contact me with any ideas or questions.

All the foregoing directives shall remain in place until June 30, 2020 or until I or my successor, Bishop Steven J. Raica, may determine otherwise.

Dispensation of All from the Mass Obligation

The dispensation from the obligation of assisting at Mass that I gave to certain groups of the faithful on March 13, 2020 *is hereby revoked*. I now grant a new dispensation from the obligation of assisting at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days to all the Roman Catholic faithful who reside in the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, with the following additional indications:

- This dispensation is granted, recognizing that not all will feel comfortable to return to public worship right away, due to concerns or fears about COVID-19.
- Some who are pregnant, immunocompromised, or otherwise in a higher-risk category will wisely wish to wait some time until returning to public worship.
- Recognizing that almost three-quarters of the deaths from COVID-19 in the State of Alabama have been among those aged 65 or over, those in that category should most certainly exercise caution and stay home until it is safer to resume public group activities.
- I urge clergy and laity alike to stay away from Mass if they feel sick.

I grant this dispensation until June 30, 2020, leaving it to our new shepherd, Bishop Steven J. Raica, to make further provision around that time as he sees fit.

I also wish to remind the faithful of the so-called “Easter Duty” – i.e., the precept of the Church that we must confess our mortal sins in kind and number at least once a year and receive Holy Communion in the state of grace during Lent or the Easter season. If you are unable to fulfill your Easter Duty before Pentecost due to the pandemic, please resolve to do so as soon as it is reasonably possible, after the danger has passed. We are not bound to the impossible.

Requested Prayers during Holy Mass

In order to render suitable thanks to the Lord for carrying us through this pandemic, pray for those who have died from it or are still suffering, and ask for special protections going forward, I also ask that Pastors and Administrators select a suitable prayer to recite either at the conclusion of the General Intercessions or after the blessing and dismissal at all public Masses until June 30, 2020 (or pending further direction from Bishop Raica).

With continued prayers for you and yours, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.
Apostolic Administrator of Birmingham in Alabama



Very Reverend Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
Chancellor

cc: Most Reverend Steven J. Raica, J.C.D.
Very Reverend Justin L. Ward, S.T.L.

Reverend Monsignor Michael J. Deering, V.G.
Very Reverend Joseph G. Culotta, V.C.