



THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL

November 18, 2020

Dedication of the Basilicas of St. Peter & St. Paul

Dear Cathedral of St. Paul Parishioners and Friends:

With this letter, I wish to announce some changes to our weekly schedule and practices in response to our bishop's decree dated yesterday, in which he prolonged the Mass dispensation due to COVID-19.

That dispensation is now extended through the end of the Christmas season: Sunday, January 10, 2021. At the same time, our bishop encourages us to understand that such a protracted dispensation is extraordinary in the history of the Church (whereas pandemics, wars, and other disturbances have happened with some frequency down through the two millennia of her great history). Our bishop also encourages us to evaluate the many risks we take in life – and how we may see going to Holy Mass and worshipping our Lord as a community among the risks that we both tolerate and manage.

Since May 13, when public worship resumed, we added a Mass on Sundays, in view of the reduced seating capacity caused by the roping-off of every other pew. The new 7:15am Mass has quickly become popular, is usually well-attended, and is now a permanent fixture in our weekly schedule. Meanwhile, since late-summer, attendance at the 8:30am and 11:00am Masses has generally increased, such that we have often had people standing in the back for lack of seats. The Saturday 5:00pm Mass attendance has fluctuated some (as it does even in “normal” times), but has also been rather well-attended. Throughout this time, we have encouraged the use of face coverings and have made them available free of charge*, although “buy-in” on masking has varied across our different Masses – and of course, masking remains a controversial societal issue over which good people strongly disagree, to include even medical professionals.

It is also important to note, with gratitude above all to God, that at no time in the past 8+ months of this pandemic has St. Paul's become a “hot spot” for the virus; I, Fr. Altonji, our deacons, and all of our staff and volunteers have remained safe, as has the overwhelming majority of parishioners. I am unaware of a single case of COVID-19 that was traceable to a Mass or other activity at the Cathedral. And although we have had an average number of funerals during this time, yet I am unaware of any that were COVID-19-related. All of this seems so improbable, so we must count our blessings and pray that God will continue to keep us all safe and sound.

With our bishop preparing us for a time when the blanket dispensation will end, I have considered ways that we might increase our capacity and sense of security, so that all may feel ready to return to church. Therefore, with this letter, I announce two changes to our weekly schedule:

1. **Confessions** will now be heard from 2:30pm to 3:45pm on Saturdays – in the CLC Bell Tower.
2. An **additional anticipated Mass** will be available at 4:00pm on Saturdays. It will be recited (no music). At both Saturday evening Masses, ***masking will now be required***. We continue to encourage the use of face coverings at the Sunday morning Masses.

These changes go in effect with the new liturgical year – the weekend following Thanksgiving, November 28 and 29. And while, as I said above, the 7:15am Sunday Mass will remain even after the pandemic passes, we should understand that *the Saturday schedule will revert back to our traditional one*; these are a provisional measure, which I will reassess every so often over the next several months. A full summary of our schedule is provided on the next page with additional detail.

Finally, in his letter, which is available on the Cathedral web site, Bishop Raica announced a “Year of the Parish and the Eucharist”. I will share further news about how we might observe that special year at the Cathedral in due course, once I receive further indications from the bishop and his staff.

As always, I welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have. And I thank you for your prayers for me and Fr. Altonji, our deacons, and our staff. God bless you and your families!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



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

* We will keep some disposable masks on hand for special needs and to share with our downtown snack bag recipients and others who come to our door. But since masks are now far more easily available than at the beginning of the pandemic, we will no longer provide them free of charge in the entrance of the church.

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PAUL • BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
WEEKLY SCHEDULE WITH NEW COVID-19 ADJUSTMENTS – STARTING NOV. 28, 2020

Monday-Friday 6:30am Daily Mass
11:30am-12:00pm Confessions (Courtyard Bell Tower)
12:10pm Daily Mass

Saturday 8:30am Daily Mass
2:30-3:45pm Confessions (Courtyard Bell Tower)
4:00pm Anticipated Mass (recited, no organ, masks required)
5:00pm Anticipated Mass (recited, organ accompaniment, masks required)

Sunday 7:15am Mass (recited, no organ)
8:30am Mass (organ accompaniment, sung responses, sung Our Father)
11:00am Mass (organ, sung responses, sung Our Father, choral accompaniment)

On Saturday evenings, we will have signage on the doors reminding about the face mask requirement at those Masses. An announcement will also be made immediately before each of those Masses.

Please note carefully that once the pandemic passes, we will revert to our longstanding Saturday schedule of 3:00-4:00pm for Confessions and 5:00pm for Mass. Any changes will be well-publicized.