



Lifting of COVID-19 Restrictions – Update – Church Reopening Plans

Effective, Monday, May 31, 2021, Memorial Day, most temporary procedures and restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic for the wellbeing of our people will be lifted. This reflects the updated guidance from civil authorities (viz., national CDC and PA health commission) and ecclesiastical (Archdiocesan) authorities.

Masks/Face coverings. Those who have been vaccinated or immunized are no longer required to wear masks or face coverings in church (effective May 13, 2021). Those who are not yet vaccinated or immunized are encouraged, but not required, to use masks/face coverings in church. Those who prefer to use masks/face coverings for personal health reasons are welcome to wear masks/face coverings at this time. All – whether they choose to wear or not wear masks/face coverings – are to be accorded due respect.

For reception of Holy Communion, if you have a mask, the mask should be removed immediately before receiving Holy Communion; and then it can be restored after consuming the Blessed Sacrament. Communicants have the option to receive the Blessed Sacrament in the hand (with right hand under left hand; and left hand forming throne for the Eucharist) or on the tongue (with head tilted backwards, mouth open wide, and tongue fully extended). Reception of Precious Blood remains suspended in the Archdiocese. No masks are worn by ministers in the sanctuary.

Pew Barriers/Capacity Limitations lifted. The ropes closing certain pews will be removed on June 1, 2021, allowing access to all pews. People are welcome to sit freely in the pews.

Ushers, Sunday Collections, and Offertory Procession. The ministry of ushers along with the Sunday Collection (which is taken up with baskets immediately following the general intercessions), and the Offertory Procession (with parishioners carrying forward the bread and wine and the usher carrying up the collection) will be restored beginning Saturday, June 5, 2021. We welcome back our wonderful ushers and we welcome anyone who would like to serve as an usher to contact the Parish Offices.

Lectors. During the pandemic, one lector was employed to read all readings. Effective, Saturday, June 5, 2021, two lectors will be assigned for each Mass: one lector for the first reader and a second lector for the second reading. We welcome back all our wonderful lectors and we welcome anyone who is interested in serving as lector to contact the Parish Offices.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Ministers of Holy Communion will not be required to use masks. In addition to two communion stations at the front of the central aisle, we will have a third station (at the top of the side aisle, near the wheelchair accessible entrance) with low-gluten hosts for those requiring special hosts. Those communicants for low-gluten hosts are asked to make their way to the side aisle for reception of Holy Communion. Ministers will continue to purify their hands immediately before distributing Holy Communion.

Congregational singing and hymnals. Effective June 5, 2021, congregational singing will be restored. Hymnals and worship aids will be restored to the pews for use by our congregants.

Cantors and Choir . Effective June 5, 2021, cantors leading congregational singing shall be restored to the sanctuary. We welcome our wonderful cantors back.

Our wonderful choir would be able to gather to practice and sing effective June 5, 2021. However, our choir generally enters a customary summer break after Pentecost Sunday (last week). So, our choir will be fully restored as customary in the fall. New cantors and choir members are welcome. All blessed with musical gifts are most welcome to offer to serve as cantor or choir member and are invited to contact the Parish Offices.

Entrance and Recessional Processions as well as Holy Water fonts are restored. Ministers will process up the center aisle at the beginning of Mass and down the center aisle at the end of Mass. Blessed holy water has been restored to the fonts.

Altar Servers. Anyone (from rising grade 5 through high school) who is interested in serving as an altar server is welcome and invited to contact the Parish Offices. Our children serving as altar servers will be restored to service in July after brief training and updating. Stay tuned for schedules to be distributed as well as for training/updating of new and returning altar servers.

Livestreaming of Mass. At present, we will continue to livestream the Mass, which will be accessible through our parish website (sjvgladwyne.com). The Church Hall will also be set up with distance seating as an additional option for participating and receiving Holy Communion.

Dispensation from Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation

Be advised that we anticipate in the near future the lifting of the dispensation which removed temporarily the obligation for attending in person Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. This dispensation was set in place during the pandemic by the Archbishop.

When the extraordinary dispensation is lifted, all Catholics will be bound in conscience to attend in person Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligations. The third commandment (To keep holy the Lord's Day) is a divine law, which must be fulfilled unless there is a compelling reason which prohibits one from fulfilling the obligation (such as a pandemic, being sick, or caring for one who is sick). While God's third commandment to attend Mass is a grave matter, God never commands the impossible. Christian teaching holds that when it is not possible to attend Mass (e.g., because there is no priest to offer Mass, one is sick, etc), the obligation to attend Mass does not bind. We look forward to and encourage everyone to return to Mass in person on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation as soon as possible. Welcome back and thank you for your collaboration!