

*R*ETURN TO MASS GUIDELINES*

Information for the Faithful A Breakdown: What You Need to Know

Effective Saturday, May 23, 2020
(Sunday Vigil of the Feast of the Ascension)



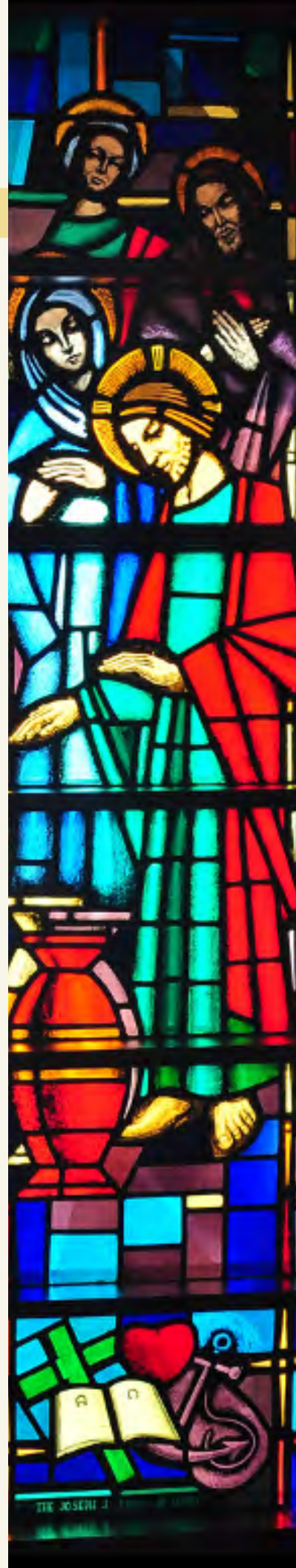
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

** The following abbreviated guidelines are subject to change, pending updated information and guidance from public health and state/government agencies.*

FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL

- The total number of people present cannot exceed the indoor capacity percentage (50% as of May 15, 2020) based on the lowest occupancy load on the certificate of occupancy of the room or facility in which the Mass is celebrated as established by state Executive Order 61.
- Social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet between people not living in the same household must be followed.
- Until further notice, Bishop Knestout continues to dispense all of the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days.
- Additional time will be given between the celebration of Sunday Masses. This allows for worship space to be cleaned and disinfected.
- All present for the liturgy (ages 3 and older) must wear face coverings, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Communion **will not be distributed by the cup** until further notice.
- The faithful are **strongly encouraged** to receive holy Communion in the hand.
- Upon presenting themselves for Communion, the faithful must wear their face covering, place one hand under the other while keeping fingers together and receive the host.
- After receiving the host, the faithful steps aside, lowers/lifts their face covering, consumes the host, lifts/lowers their face covering, and returns to their seat.
- Those who wish to receive on the tongue are asked to receive **after** all those have received in the hand, and too, receive only from the priest.
- Priests and deacons may wear non-latex gloves when distributing Communion. Care should be taken to avoid any skin-to-skin contact.
- However, if a priest/deacon chooses not to wear non-latex gloves, he must disinfect his hands prior to distributing Communion, i.e., using Purell.
- Priests and deacons may use an instrument, such as tongs, to distribute Communion. The priest and deacon should take great care so as not to touch the hands of the faithful with the instrument.
- The priest and deacon must wear a face covering for the distribution of Communion.
- Only the priest and deacon are to distribute Communion during the Mass.
- If the priest's or deacon's hand or the instrument comes into contact with the faithful's hand, disinfectant wipes or a clean, unused cloth and a bowl of disinfectant should be available for the priest or deacon to sanitize his fingers or the instrument before continuing with the distribution of Communion.



- The parish must take any steps necessary to ensure people in line to receive Communion maintain social distancing between themselves, which could include tape lines on the floor.

- Parishes are to continue the practice of refraining from holding hands during the Lord's Prayer and shaking hands during the Sign of Peace. A bow or verbal gesture is appropriate.

- There is to be no presentation of the **offertory** gifts.

- Collection baskets are not to be passed person-to-person. With an usher present, large baskets into which people may drop envelopes or donations could be placed at church exits.

- Parishes are to suppress the distribution of paper bulletins at this time. They may continue to be available online.

- Due to the gathering limit established by the governor of Virginia, no social gatherings may occur before or after Mass.

- Outside of liturgical celebrations, the number allowed in the church is never to exceed 10 persons at one time.

- Holy water fonts, **including the baptismal font**, are to remain empty until further notice.

- All hymnals, worship aids, Bibles, prayer cards or other paper resources must be removed from pews.

- All those as defined by the Virginia Health Department as more vulnerable, i.e., 65+ years of age, those with compromised immune systems, those with underlying health conditions, etc., should be encouraged to stay at home.

- Parishes should advise the faithful to arrive **at least 30 minutes** prior to Mass so they can be directed to their seats.

- Parishes are strongly encouraged to avoid asking those in a vulnerable category to volunteer as ministers at Mass.

- Parishes may resume the celebration of Holy Hours of Adoration with Exposition for the lay faithful.

- Parishes are encouraged to consider suspending the ministry of altar server at this time. If there are servers, they **must** wear a face covering at all times.

- Parishes should continue livestreaming/recording Mass for the faithful unable to attend, i.e., those in a vulnerable category.

- Priests should continue posting written or videotaped homilies and reflections from the readings of the Mass of the Day on the parish website.

As of this writing, there is no determination for how long the above restrictions will be in place.





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