

## General Information on Resuming of Public Masses During Relaxation of Isolation Periods

**Praised be Jesus Christ! Now and forever, Amen!**

**St. Ignatius of Loyola church is pleased to announce the resumption of Masses open to assemblies for the celebration of the Lord's Day beginning Saturday, May 30, at 4:30 in the afternoon, and Sunday, May 31, at 9:30 in the morning.** As your parish priest, I ask you to join me in preparing the parish as well as the church building in what our Ordinary, the Most Reverend Steven J. Raica, calls our learning "all over again what it means to gather together." Each of us has to be patient with, considerate of, and responsible to, one another as we prepare for the resumption of public Masses because we are still in the public health emergency of a pandemic.

Accordingly, **Bishop Raica has promulgated instructions to which each of us has the responsibility to carefully adhere, if we are to safely resume communal worship at St. Ignatius of Loyola church during this public health emergency.** Please note that you may read the full document to which we must adhere through this public health emergency, until otherwise changed by the diocese, elsewhere on this website. **Everyone's health safety – rather than parochial custom, human tradition, personal preference, appearances or even hospitality – must be the priority for each one of us, out of consideration for our neighbor and community. Offer up to God, with the rest of the parish, a sacrifice of praise and charity by your cooperation with the diocesan instructions, unto the greater glory of God and your neighbor's health safety at Holy Mass.** Knowing and doing what is expected of us can be an assurance to others that their own health is important to us all. **The diocesan instruction is subject to change, and we will inform parishioners of changes through the bulletin and the website.**

**The following is a summary of the diocesan directives' seven-page document, as applied to our church situation. In the diocesan policy, "safe distancing" or "safe physical distancing" means 2 meters or 6 feet from your nearest neighbor not from your own household.**

- ❖ **We are to refrain from all physical contact with anyone who is not of our household. Shaking hands in greeting people in church is a grave danger for communicating viruses, and is suspended at liturgies in the Diocese of Gaylord until further notice. Please do not begrudge someone who chooses not to extend a hand if you do.**
- ❖ **Please remember that right now, no one is obligated to attend Mass for the Lord's Day. A dispensation from the obligation to participate at Mass on the Lord's Day is in force at least through 6 September 2020, for the peace of heart of people who should not participate at Mass, or who are not comfortable doing so. Therefore anyone more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19 because of heart disease such as high blood pressure, lung or respiratory disorders, diabetes, or have completed the 65<sup>th</sup> year, the Diocese of Gaylord "strongly encourages to remain at home for the sake of their own health. Those who are not comfortable being in public for any reason at this time are also encouraged to remain home."**
- ❖ **If you are able and willing to enter the church under diocesan guidelines, you must enroll each week to reserve places for you and your family, or you cannot be admitted into the church. If you would like to participate as a Reader or EMOHC please indicate your willingness during your call.**
- ❖ **Sign up will ordinarily be available the Mondays through Thursdays immediately before the Lord's Day celebrations, and no sooner. During the week of Memorial (Monday, 25 May), the sign-up**

period will be Tuesday through Thursday. **Telephone the office during office hours of 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. to enroll the number of people in your household who plan to attend a particular Mass. The current limit for each Mass is 48 (forty-eight) persons.**

- ❖ **We need to know if your visiting family whom you seek to enroll with you are staying at separate lodgings, which would mean you would have to sit apart from family members not staying with you,** under the diocesan and Federal policy. **Whichever visitors stay with you in your home may sit with you,** because you will have already assumed the risk of being physically near to them. If your plans change, please telephone the office so we may open up seating to others. Once the limit for each Mass is met each week, **when you call to enroll for a place and are unsuccessful at securing some or any of the desired number of places, the dispensation from the obligation to attend the Lord's Day liturgies becomes effective for you and your household.**
  - The limit of the number of participants at Mass is subject to expansion, if the diocese allows it later on during the public health emergency.
- ❖ On the day of the Mass, each of us is requested to check our temperatures before going to church.
  - If your temperature is greater than 100.4°F or 38°C, you and your household must remain at home, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control.
  - The diocese **strongly recommends that you provide and wear your own mask** for the protection of others. As the diocese allows churches to have larger gatherings, resulting in our being physically closer to others, the use of masks may be required in the future.
  - The diocese strongly recommends that you take to Mass your own hand sanitizer and gloves, if you want to use any. This is because the shortage of hand sanitizer from being prioritized for health care settings, at times will prevent us from providing hand sanitizers at the entrance of church.
- ❖ Although all doors will be unlocked for exiting, the only entrance unlocked for entry before Mass will be on the south, or alley, or school side of the church. There an usher will ask you to identify yourself and the number of people with you. Make sure you tell the usher if you have fewer people in your party than you enrolled. If there are any open spots available because of this scenario, the ushers will provide entry at the Third Street entrance after the beginning of Mass, until we reach the limit of 48 persons.
  - Once inside the church, if you would like to leave an offering, there will be a basket available for you to leave the offering as you complete your entrance.
  - You and your household should sit in the part of the pew marked with a blue cross.
  - After Mass begins, entrance into the church will be through the Third Street entrance only.
- ❖ The following customary acts of the Mass have been addressed by the Ordinary's diocesan directives as follows:
  - There will continue to be no holy water except for use for the sacrament of Baptism.
  - No articles are to be left in pews; we are not allowed to make hymnals available to you.
  - Singing will therefore be limited during the Mass, likely the ordinary parts of the Mass or songs the accompanist deems likely to be known at least somewhat by heart.
  - The procession and recession of the ordained ministers will be in the front of the church.
  - Presently, according to the diocese, it would not be prudent to have altar servers in the sanctuary.
  - There will be no procession of gifts.
  - There will be no exchange of a sign of peace.
  - The cry room is not to be used because it does not have enough area for safe distancing. We are encouraged to be patient and understanding of families with members making a fuss in church. Most other people were once patient and understanding with our families when we were those ages.

- After the “Lord, I am not worthy. . .” Father will declare from the altar, “The Body of Christ”.  
**We respond as an assembly with the declaration, “Amen.”**
- ❖ **Holy Communion will be administered to you where you are**, at your pew from the row immediately ahead of you, to reduce the possibility of non-safe distancing of communicants in a Communion procession. You may choose whether you wish to receive Holy Communion kneeling or standing before the minister arrives.
  - As the minister of the Eucharist approaches you, uncover your face. Make sure to hold out open, un-gloved and flatly extended hands and fingers. Do not form your hands into the shape of a cup or take the Sacred Host from the minister. **Without saying anything, let the minister release the Sacred Host onto your open, un-gloved and flatly extended hands and fingers. After receiving a Sacred Host for yourself, cover your face again** and wear your gloves again, depending on whether you will have taken your own gloves to church.
  - **If a Sacred Host is lost to the floor, please do not touch It.** Keep watch over the place where It lies until the minister of the Eucharist can return with the deacon or priest to retrieve and properly dispose of the Sacred Host after the last person will have received the Eucharist.
- ❖ Although discouraged by the diocese, **Communion on the tongue is still permitted in this diocese, and is to be received at St. Ignatius of Loyola Church only as follows:**
  - As the minister of Holy Communion approaches at your row, keep your face covered; or you may shake your head, or more subtly, without touching your face place a finger in front of your lips as you would in making a “shush” gesture.
  - After the minister of Holy Communion will have moved away from your row, approach the front of the church with your face covered.
  - Kneel or stand along the communion rail at safe intervals, marked by blue crosses on the surface of the Communion rail. Alternatively, if there are many receiving on the tongue, stand in the main aisle, at safe distance from others in their pews or in the line with you.
  - When it is free, approach the Communion rail for receiving Communion at one of the marked locations, on your tongue from the Ordinary minister of Holy Communion. If it is not physically possible for you to kneel, please remain standing at the place along the rail, leaning in the direction of the rail to help the minister of Holy Communion. When the minister approaches, uncover your face. Receiving on the tongue at the rail allows the Sacred Host to be released by the minister onto your **open tongue, extended from inside your mouth**, with a reduced possibility of touching your lips, tongue, or the interior of your mouth. **Extend your tongue from inside your open mouth; it will not be sufficient to simply open the mouth. After receiving the Sacred Host, cover your face before turning back toward your pew.**
- ❖ After returning to their chairs and the praying of the Post-Communion oration, the ushers will go back to the front of the church. After the recessional song is complete, the ushers will go from the front of the church to the back, releasing row by row to help maintain safe physical distancing. Please cooperate with usher instructions when your row is released, along the way maintaining intervals of safe distance between you and the next household ahead and behind you.
  - **The diocese explicitly instructs the priest and deacon to go to the sacristy immediately after the recessional rites. They are not now permitted to greet you as has customarily been done.**
  - **Please remove from your pew and the church anything you will have brought to the pew with you, including food, any waste, disposable tissues and personal protection equipment, toys and garments. We cannot promise that your personal belongings of value to you will be reserved by the church because of the possibility of surface contact with viruses.**

- ❖ Do not assemble near the exits for socializing until outside the church, maintaining safe distancing once outside.

These directives, extensive even in summary, are meant for you to protect others. Please consider your moral duty to your neighbor at church. If you do not care to follow the diocesan guidelines, you may disturb those near you inside the church while you are there. People may be more at ease in your presence if you returned to Mass when ready to follow these instructions from our Ordinary for the common good of all in church.

When I am confident that all of us are willing to cooperate with these instructions at assemblies for the Lord's Day, St. Ignatius of Loyola church will again open the celebration of Masses for weekdays, when we are not likely to have ushers. More information on weekday Masses will be posted at that time.

May God bless in a special way you who refrain from Mass for safety's sake, and also you who labor in church with the rest of your parishioners in making the experiences of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as safe and unifying as possible nowadays, through your carrying out these instructions.

In Christ and His Mother, I remain, by the grace of God and the favor of the Ordinary of the Diocese of Gaylord, your parish priest,  
-- *Father Rolando Silva*