

Covid-19 Holy Communion Guidelines

Hello Everyone,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to outline the process of distribution of Holy Communion in our parishes. This is the first major step we have taken toward reopening since this whole pandemic lockdown started. After consultation with a number of his priests Bishop Libasci has decided to allow for the faithful to receive Holy Communion, beginning this Memorial Weekend. What we are allowing is different than what some other dioceses have begun. Many other dioceses are beginning social-distancing masses instead of a Holy Communion line. In weighing the various possibilities, one major concern was that with social distancing guidelines, many people would not be able to attend mass, who would want to, even if we increased the number of masses offered. Clearly this creates a potentially painful and difficult circumstance where some can go to mass and others can't. Therefore Bishop Libasci has chosen to offer Holy Communion on Sundays to all the faithful who desire and are healthy enough to come to the church. It is important to remind you all that the Sunday Obligation is still suspended during this time. You do not commit a sin if you choose not to participate during the pandemic.

With that said I would like to outline the guidelines on how we are to implement this practice in our two parishes. At the Parish of the Holy Spirit Holy Communion will be offered at Both St Bernard's and St Margaret Mary. At Mary, Queen of Peace Holy Communion will be offered this Memorial Weekend at St Joseph in Hinsdale and then alternate between the two churches (St Stanislaus and St Joseph) each following weekend. Pentecost being at St Stanislaus, etc. This practice will continue until the Bishop decides to make a change, there is no set date, yet, for how long we will be doing this.

Please note the following very important information:

If you have had the virus and are not yet recovered or have come into contact with someone who has, we ask that you refrain from receiving.

The intention of distributing Holy Communion in this way is that everyone, in so far as is possible, who comes to receive Holy Communion first participates in a livestream mass, a pre-recorded mass, or a television mass on Sunday. Ideally you would watch the 9am Livestream mass from St Bernard's Church and then make your way, in your car, directly to the parish church of your choosing. The idea is that your reception of Holy Communion is part of the mass you just participated in.

We will begin distribution of Holy Communion, from within the church, promptly at 10am. Each site will offer only at 10am, until finished.

Many of you will see friends and family you haven't seen in a while and will want to chat. Please, upon entering into the church, keep a reverential silence the entire time you are in the church. You can easily chat outside instead.

Masks must be worn the whole time, until the moment before receiving Holy Communion and then promptly placed back over your nose and mouth after having received. You must have a mask to receive Communion.

You must have a mask to receive Communion. We will have, on hand, a very limited number of masks to distribute, please bring your mask if you want to receive Communion.

The Knights of Columbus will be present as ushers to direct people on where to go. Essentially, We will be forming a social distancing line outside. People will enter into the churches from the main entrance. At the entrances there will be hand sanitizer available, should you need it. The masks must remain on during the whole procession line. You will enter one way and be directed out another way.

Communion may be received standing or kneeling, in the hand or on the tongue. Ministers of Holy Communion will be able to sanitize their hands should any mucous contamination occur. (I know some people will be concerned about people receiving on the tongue, but the bishop was very clear that people have a right to receive as they wish.) We will be very careful when giving Communion.

Please maintain social distancing the whole time.

If you have mobility issues and can't do the stairs, please find one of the ushers and let him know. He will come to one of the ministers of Communion and we will go to you to give you Communion.

After receiving Holy Communion no one is permitted to remain in the church, be it in the pews or in the aisles. We ask that you reverently and silently make your way outside and back to your car after receiving.

We will have baskets available for you to leave your weekly collection offering. Thank you in advance.

We will continue to offer live streamed masses during the week, as we have been (Tuesday and Wednesday excluded). Due to the precautionary measures needed, Holy Communion will only be offered on Sunday mornings.

If you are already an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and only if needed, you may bring Holy Communion to someone in your household ONLY. There is to be no Communion calls made to various houses at this time.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience. I look forward to seeing many of you this coming weekend.

God Bless you all.

Fr Alan