

*R*ETURN TO MASS GUIDELINES*

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

Effective Monday, November 16, 2020



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

- If you have a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, you will not be permitted to enter the building.
- Individuals attending Mass must be at least six feet apart when seated and must practice proper social distancing at all times. Household members may be seated together.*
- 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 those **aged 5** and up and those to receive Communion must wear a **cloth** face mask or face covering. Be sure the mask covers your nose and your mouth.*
- 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 **cloth** 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 **cloth** 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.
- All ministers must disinfect their hands prior to distributing Communion, i.e., using Purell.
- All ministers must wear a **cloth** face covering for the distribution of Communion.*
- If the minister'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 minister 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.
- Baptismal and holy water fonts with running water may be filled at this time at the discretion of the pastor. However, any font with stagnant (non-running) water 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 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.

** Note changes effective to the Executive Summary November 16, 2020.*

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





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