

The Resumption of Public Masses without Reservations but With Precautions

Our bulletin deadline is Wednesday noon. I say that only to apologize for the confusion caused by the announcement of resuming limited public attendance at Mass with reserved seating. It was sent to the printers just a couple of hours before the Minnesota bishops issued their statement allowing for a broader attendance of up to one-third the capacity of each church.

At this time, we are beginning only with weekday Masses, as I explain in what follows. However, ***no reservations will be required*** at this time.

I recognize that this development is welcomed joyously by some and deeply troubles others. I fully anticipate our numbers to be smaller for a time, as has been seen in many places as opportunities to resume routines have been opened. Again, we are all seeking a balance between the value of faith, sacrament, and community at the heart of Catholic life, and the protection of the common good; people of good will may differ on where that balance lies.

To allow our bishops and the Walz administration more time to reach an understanding, at this time, we will begin with the resumption of weekday Masses this Tuesday. By the end of the week, I will update you on plans for the May 30-31 weekend.

If the resumption of somewhat larger public celebrations proves problematic, we will adapt as necessary. All I can ask (and I know it is all too familiar in these months): please be patient with the uncertainty.

Therefore some clarifications:

- ***The dispensation from the Sunday obligation remains in effect for all Catholics.*** That is, attendance at public Masses is completely optional. There is no obligation or expectation for anyone to attend. Those who are feeling ill are not to come. Those who have concerns about health or safety are encouraged to stay at home. We will continue our daily livestreaming of Mass, as noted below.

- The public celebration of Masses with limited numbers begins on ***Tuesday, May 26***. Again, you do not need to call to reserve a space. The Mass schedule is on page 5 in the bulletin. Please check each week because this schedule may vary. Generally:

Weekdays: 7:00 a.m. at St. John Cantius (M, T, W, Th)
 7:15 a.m. at St. Anthony's (T, W, Th, F)
 10:00 a.m. at Holy Spirit (livestreamed) (M, W, Th, F)

As noted above, we will decide on the weekend Masses by next Friday, May 29.

The ***precautions*** outlined earlier will be observed. This plan has been specifically approved by the Diocese. These include:

- social distancing of six feet will be required. Members of the same household may sit more closely to one another if they choose.

- total attendance at Masses is not to exceed one-third of each church's seating capacity as determined by the fire marshal. Practically, this means: 100 at St. John Cantius; 250 at St. Anthony (with balconies); 150 at Holy Spirit (overflow of an additional 30 is possible). Please follow the directions of ushers and the signs, ropes, or tape marks provided to keep appropriate space. We do not even begin to approach these numbers during the week, of course, but we do ask you to keep the limits in mind. We ask your cooperation to minimize restroom use as well.

- face coverings are strongly encouraged; gloves may be worn by those who choose. They need to be removed in order to receive Communion, of course; those who choose to receive on the tongue may keep their gloves on. Reception in the hand is preferred at this time. However, the celebrant, deacon, music ministers, and lector will not wear these items due to the nature of their role in the liturgy.

- we will not be using Mass servers or choirs/ensembles at the present time. Music will be limited to an accompanist and cantor at most, or the entire Mass with antiphons will simply be spoken, which is foreseen in the Rite.

- Communion will be offered only under the form of bread.

- when weekend Masses resume, the collection will be taken up with long-handled baskets or dropped into baskets as you leave; please follow the celebrant's directions. Those who wish may continue to mail in their contribution or use electronic giving. Thank you for your ongoing support!

- the Sign of Peace and any procession with the gifts will be omitted.

- the Holy Water fonts will remain empty, and the hymnals and missalettes are removed from the church and placed in storage for now. Bulletins will be placed on tables for you to take rather than handed out; they are also online if you prefer not to have a paper copy.

- the pews, door handles, musical and technical equipment, and other surfaces and objects used will be sanitized between each Mass.

Additional Information on Parish Life

The parish offices *will remain closed* to public business; as before, please email or call for assistance from our office staff.

Confessions remain by appointment only; please call your parish office to reserve a time for either Thursday afternoon or Saturday afternoon.

Public prayer and Adoration will continue at St. Anthony's as we have done since May 4:

Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (*note that weekend times will vary when weekend public Masses resume*)

Plans for Baccalaureate, First Communions, Confirmation, and other parish events remain pending. We apologize for the many inconveniences.

Please continue to pray for an end to this pandemic, for peace in our communities and world, for those who are suffering in manifold ways from the consequences of this worldwide crisis, and for the coming of the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Guide.

Thank you for your understanding and your cooperation.

Fr. Tom