

MASSES AND OTHER PARISH EVENTS INSTRUCTIONS, GUIDELINES AND TIMELINES

AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church

EFFECTIVE SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2020*

**this document will be updated as further instructions come from Bishop Taylor*

Updated: Wednesday, May 6, 2020

This document lays out the instructions for participating in Mass at Our Lady of the Holy Souls. It will also give a timeline, subject to change, on how we will begin other activities and ministries in the parish. As with all things in the Church, our Bishop has the final word when it comes to Masses and how we are to celebrate them. I ask you for prayers and patience as we start again celebrating public Masses and slowly begin to reopen the parish.

WEEKEND MASSES

Effective May 16th, we will resume our normal weekend Mass Schedule of 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays and 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 5:30 p.m. on Sundays.

Due to restrictions we are limited on how many can attend Mass at one time. Each Mass will be limited to 60 people. We ask that every person (family) who wishes to attend a Mass to sign up either by emailing smatchett@holysouls.org or calling the Church Office at 501-663-8632. You must do one or the other to attend, it is the only way we can limit our crowd. Let us know which Mass time you would like to attend and the number of people in your household attending. An alternative at Holy Souls is to bring your own chairs and sit outside in courtyard or in front of the church. You must continue to social distance and wear a mask. Since we have outside speakers you are able to listen to Mass and a Eucharistic Minister will bring Communion to you.

For those still uncomfortable about coming to Mass, remember the Bishop has kept the dispensation in place that lifts the Sunday obligation until further notice. Plus, we will continue to livestream Mass every weekend on Saturdays at 4:00 p.m.

Please note that all COVID-19 regulations apply. Do not enter the church if you have a fever, are not feeling well today, have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are over 65 years or have a chronic or immune suppressed condition at any age, such as diabetes, cancer, cancer survivor, COPD, MS, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic bronchitis, asthma, obesity, and heart disease.

REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN MASSES:

1. Every person must sign up by emailing smatchett@holysouls.org or calling the Church Office at 501-663-8632. Let us know which Mass time you would like to attend and the number of people in your household attending.
2. When entering the church we ask that you enter at the front entrance only.

3. You must maintain a 6-foot distance between you and any other person who does not live with you at all times; whether entering the church, sitting in the pews, going to communion, and exiting the Church.
4. All participants, including children over 10 years of age, must wear a mask or other covering of their mouth and nose.
5. Hand sanitizer may or may not be available at the entrances of the church. We are having problems locating sufficient quantities. We are working on this, but no guarantees, so please wash your hands before coming into church and perhaps bring hand wipes with you.
6. Parents with small children, I ask you in these times of the pandemic to pay particular attention to your children by keeping them close to you and making sure they keep the proper distance from others because they have no concept of Social Distancing.
7. Come to Mass with an open mind and an understanding that even though we are restarting public Masses again, our Masses will be different and with lots of restrictions. Look for the blessings in these changes rather than the easy path to criticize what the Bishop and Pastors are doing.

THE NO'S

1. There will be no Precious Blood for anyone except for the celebrant.
2. There will be no handshake or other sign of peace that involves physical contact.
3. There will be no Communion on the tongue; those who are unwilling to receive on the hand make a Spiritual Communion instead. While some may view Communion on the tongue to be a "right," these are extraordinary times and attention to the common good takes precedence over personal preference.
4. There will be no water in the holy water fonts.
5. There will be no holding hands at the Lord's Prayer.
6. There will be no hymnals, music books or envelopes in the pew.
7. There will be no offertory or procession in or out of the church by the celebrant.
8. There will be no children's collection.
9. There will be no collection taken up by ushers. There will be a basket at the back of the center aisle for you to place your donation. If there is a Second Collection scheduled there will be an additional basket. We highly encourage you to sign up for Online Giving at www.holysouls.org.
10. There will be no nursery.

MINISTERS NEEDED

Two Eucharist ministers per Mass to assist the celebrant. No priest, deacon or Communion Minister in a risk group will distribute Communion unless there is no alternative. The risk groups that disqualify one from distributing Communion are: age (over 65) and chronic or immune suppressed conditions at any age, such as diabetes, cancer, cancer survivor, COPD, MS, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic bronchitis, asthma, obesity and heart disease.

1. One lector per Mass.
2. At least 5 volunteers to monitor door entrances and bathrooms.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

1. Initially, we will only have three lines for Holy Communion. There will be a mark on the floor every 6 feet as a guide to where you should be standing in line.
2. When receiving communion have your mask on until you receive communion in your hands, step aside, and lift or take your mask off, consume the Eucharist, and put mask back on before heading back to the pews.
3. No one comes forward for a blessing in lieu of Communion, all are blessed together at the end of Mass.

OTHER RULES AT MASS

1. Our bathrooms will be monitored to allow only one person at a time to enter unless they are family members. All children (10 years or younger) must be accompanied by one adult or teenage sibling that lives in the same household.
2. No blessings will be offered after Mass to individuals or families for any reason. The final blessing at Mass is sufficient.
3. Our priests will not greet you before or after the Mass. Please understand this is not because we do not want to, but every encounter increases the risk of exposure to covid-19.
4. No coffee and donuts until further notice.
5. No congregating before or after Mass.

TIMELINE FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF PARISH LIFE

1. Weddings and Funerals can resume using the same restrictions as on Sunday Mass currently in place.
2. Our Adoration time on Wednesdays are still discontinued until future notice.
3. Church Office will open to the public on Tuesday, May 26th. Guidelines will be released by Friday, May 22nd. for office visits and appointments with the clergy.
4. Daily Masses will resume soon.
5. Confessions will continue as normal on Wednesdays from 4 to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

OTHER EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

1. Special Sacraments Mass, First Communions, Confirmations, the Easter Sacraments for those in RCIA will be celebrated once we are able to gather without so many restrictions.
2. YFF-Registration dates and news will be released soon.
3. RCIA will start at its normal time in August.
4. Youth Ministry will continue online via Zoom and other media platforms until September.
5. Baptism classes continue but with smaller gatherings.
6. Other Parish Meetings – no meetings in person. Only Zoom meetings held at this time.

OTHER MINISTRY INVOLVING CLERGY

1. There will be no House Blessings until further notice.
2. Visits to Hospital and Nursing Homes will be limited to those dying and in need of the Sacraments.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We are living in different times and we will be for the foreseeable future. This is uncharted ground we face and it is wise to move slowly and with caution. The day will come when COVID-19 will end, and we will be able to resume all normal activities, programs, and ministries. As Jesus says, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled, have faith in God and faith in me.”* We all need prayers at this time; our world, our leaders, our community, and our families, so I remind us all to Remain Firm and Steadfast. God bless you!

Father John