



PROTOCOLS FOR RESUMING PUBLIC MASS¹

beginning June 1, 2020
until further notice

On May 21, Bishop Lawrence T. Persico, Bishop of Erie, released a significant series of protocols regarding the return to public worship. He also announced that parishes prepared to meet the health and safety protocols established by the Diocese could resume public Masses on Monday, June 1.

Bishop Persico emphasized that **the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Masses remains in effect.** The elderly and people with vulnerabilities are asked to continue participating via livestream rather than attending Mass in person. The Bishop also encourages those who are not yet comfortable with being in public to continue worshipping from home. Bishop Persico will suspend Mass again in any county that Governor Wolf returns to the 'red phase'.

"There's no doubt the road ahead has significant challenges for all of us," the bishop said.

Below are the protocols and guidelines pertinent to Our Lady of Mercy's resumption of public Masses:

SCHEDULE

1. **Beginning Monday, June 1, 2020, Our Lady of Mercy will resume our regular Mass schedule.**
 - **Monday through Friday – 8:30 a.m.**
 - **Saturday – 6:00 p.m.** (no 8:30 a.m. Mass on Saturday)
 - Sunday – 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.**
2. All public celebrations of Mass will take place in the **primary worship space.**
3. For those not attending Mass in person, we will continue to **live-stream Sunday Mass at 11:00 a.m.** on Facebook and YouTube.

PRELIMINARY PARAMETERS

4. Please understand that **no one is required to attend Mass** if they are not comfortable or if it is unsafe for them to do so. If you are in high-risk categories, not feeling well, or uncomfortable, please stay home and continue worshipping via live-stream.
5. The maximum number of participants is 1/3 of the building occupancy. **Only every third pew will be available for seating.**
6. **Spiritual Communion** continues to be strongly encouraged.

¹ following Bishop Persico's Decree: *Establishing Protocols for the Resumption of Public Masses*, published 05/21/2020

ENTERING, SEATING, EXITING

7. **Sanitize your hands** when arriving and as needed while you are at the church. Please make an effort to bring your own sanitizer.
8. A **face mask** which covers the nose and mouth must be properly worn at all times. Please have it on when exiting your vehicle.
9. Entrances and exits will be propped open; **avoid touching high-contact areas** such as door handles, hand rails, and push plates.
10. When possible, **use the restroom before coming to church** to avoid gatherings in and near the restrooms.
11. Upon arriving for Mass, **go directly to an open pew and file into the middle** so no one has to crawl over you. Please **do not congregate in the Gathering Space**.
12. Six feet of **social distancing** between different households must always be observed.
 - Members of the same household may sit together.
 - Multiple households may share a pew, provided there is proper social distancing.
13. When exiting, please do so in an orderly fashion. **We will dismiss row by row**, beginning from the back of the Worship Space. Maintain social distancing and return directly to your vehicle, continuing to wear your face mask. Please **do not congregate in the gathering space**.
14. Printed bulletins will be on tables if you would like one; digital copies are always available on our website.
15. The church and all liturgical items will be sanitized between Masses.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MASS

16. The following liturgical actions remain suspended:
 - greeting of parishioners before and after Mass
 - placing of holy water in fonts
 - exchange of the sign of peace
 - distribution of the Precious Blood
17. There will be **no communal singing** of hymns, psalms, or Mass parts. Singing expels significantly more respiratory particles than speaking. At some Masses, there will be musical accompaniment and a soloist may sing. If attending Mass in person, you are asked to join your hearts silently and prayerfully to the music.
18. There will be no collection or presentation of the gifts. **Baskets will be placed near the church doors where you may leave your offering.**

19. The universal posture for the Eucharistic Prayer will be **standing**. Please **do not use the kneelers**.
20. Please **do not hold hands** during the Lord's Prayer (Our Father). You are invited to maintain the open hands "orans" position.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

21. **Communion in the hand** is strongly recommended by the Bishop.
22. **Sanitize your hands** and continue to **wear your face mask** before entering the Communion line.
23. When approaching to receive Communion, approach in a **single-file line**, one row at a time.
24. **Maintain social distance** by standing on the marked lines in the aisles.
25. If you are not receiving Communion, still **proceed through the communion line** without receiving. This will help facilitate the flow of the procession.
26. **When receiving Communion, take the Host in one hand, step to the side, pull down your mask with the other hand and consume the Host. Immediately replace your mask and return to your seat.**

REVISIONS AND FUTURE INFORMATION

27. As we resume celebrating public Mass and the Coronavirus pandemic continues to evolve, our practices and **protocols may change**. Please be patient and flexible.
28. If you have questions or concerns, please call the parish office at 814-899-5342.

Our Lady of Mercy, pray for us.