

CHURCH OPENING

From: Vicar General
To: Parish Reopening

Cardinal Cupich has accepted the recommendation of the Task Force that the resumption of public Masses in the Archdiocese of Chicago may begin with Sunday Masses June 6-7 and daily Masses beginning June 8 under the following stipulations:

- We still advise that the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions stay at home and participate through livestreamed and televised Masses.
- Pastors are encouraged to continue livestreaming parish liturgies as a way of serving those who cannot attend Masses in person. Livestreaming is also a good practice to strengthen the sense of community for the entire parish community.
- Each parish must be certified for each Phase. As a reminder, to be certified for Phase 2 a parish must already be certified for Phase 1/1A, it must have celebrated/hosted three Phase 1/1A gatherings and it must have a reservation/registration system in place to effectively manage attendance.
- The limit on attendees in the archdiocese per Mass and all other liturgical celebrations is between 15 and 20% of your total Church seating capacity (at the discretion of the parish leadership team) while maintaining proper social distancing.
- However, it is strongly advised that for the first weekend of Phase 2 parishes begin with a 15% limit or no more than 50 attendees (whichever is less) at each Mass or liturgy. This recommendation is made so that your reopening team and volunteers can gain critical experience in managing and keeping safe larger numbers of people, as well as accomplishing cleaning and disinfecting between services. This further gives practice at managing the flow of parishioners coming and going between Masses while observing social distancing.
- Cardinal Cupich has instructed pastors to follow closely state guidelines for the reopening of churches. You will notice the following: The entire Church has been sanitized. Pews have been adequately spaced to facilitate social distancing. Pew books have been removed. Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance. Wear a mask when attending church. You need to provide your own mask. Those who are at risk or sick with Coronavirus please stay home.
- Per the Phase 2 certification requirements, parishes will need to use a reservation/registration system to ensure proper management of parishioner attendance; this will benefit both parishioners as an assurance of their ability to participate, as well as volunteers and their ability anticipate attendance. Importantly, per guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health, parishes will need to retain parishioner attendance records (including name, date and time of attendance) for the purposes of contact tracing if and when a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified. Those records will need to be stored securely and must be deleted 14 days after each liturgical celebration on a rolling basis if not requested by health officials. This is to protect the privacy of all people.

As we proceed with our church reopening plan, we must also recognize the deep hurt and anger that is being expressed in demonstrations currently taking place in our streets and those around the country. As Cardinal Cupich recently noted, we are long overdue in this country for a national reconciliation to address the evils of racism, hatred and indifference that have afflicted our people since the first slave ships docked on this continent. As many Catholics prepare to re-emerge from our homes to gather around the Eucharistic table of our Lord, let us do so with a renewed conviction to gather together, as one people, united in love for our neighbor.

Thank you for all you are doing to bring the life and love of Jesus Christ to His people. As we celebrate this Pentecost, may the Holy Spirit fill your hearts and kindle within you the fire of God's love in manifest ways.

Peace,

Bishop Ron Hicks