



DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG

FOR IMMEDIATE USE — May 18, 2020

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Diocese of Greensburg to allow parishes to recommence Mass on June 1

GREENSBURG — The Diocese of Greensburg will allow parishes to recommence Holy Mass on June 1, Bishop Edward C. Malesic announced May 18.

Bishop Malesic noted, however, that returning to Mass and other liturgies will include notable differences from past experiences as parishioners will be required to wear masks and remain six feet apart. Additionally, the Sign of Peace will no longer include a handshake and holy water and baptismal fonts will be drained.

“We might find that other practices need to be altered as well as we learn to live in this ‘new normal’ for the time being. Our clergy, my staff and I will do everything we can to help you understand these changes and remind you that we must always proceed with caution, empathy, understanding and faith,” Bishop Malesic said.

Recently, Bishop Malesic established a Committee for Recommending In-Person Worship and Operations. This group of clergy and lay leaders was tasked with determining guidelines and a timeline for re-opening our church buildings for prayer and worship. In wave one of its plan, the committee developed guidelines for re-opening churches for private prayer on May 15. The guidelines include mandates for cleaning and sanitization.

“For the foreseeable future, all people will remain dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays. I ask that you make your own prudent and informed decision on whether to attend Sunday Mass or not, after taking your own situation into account. You should especially use this dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass at this time if you are elderly or have a medical

condition that puts you at greater risk for serious complications from this disease,” Bishop Malesic said.

Additionally:

- Those who feel vulnerable because of their age or health are encouraged to stay home, while those who are sick should not attend public Masses. Streaming Masses will continue.
- People will be seated at least in every other pew using social distancing guidelines.
- All communicants will be encouraged to receive the Sacred Host in the hand.
- The chalice of the Precious Blood will not be offered to the congregation.
- The Sign of Peace will no longer include a handshake, instead we will turn to the person next to us and offer a reverential bow.
- Holy water and baptismal fonts will be drained.
- Musicians are being asked to limit music, and choirs are not permitted.
- At the discretion of the pastor, Masses are permitted in social halls, other large spaces and outdoors including parking lots.
- Confirmations and First Communions can recommence in July and should be divided into smaller groups if necessary. Receptions into the Church for RCIA can recommence immediately at the pastor’s discretion. Special consideration will be given to families who would like to delay sacramental celebrations until a later date.

Bishop Malesic encourages people to stay connected to their faith by watching a streaming Mass or by visiting TheAccentOnline.org regularly to read the latest news, checking the diocese website, or signing up for text alerts by texting the word FAITH to the number 724-305-3057.

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