

Pastor's Corner

October 11, 2020 Bulletin



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is with great joy that I write this column having heard the “good news” that our Catholic churches will begin to admit more people to the celebration of Mass. At St. Paul the Apostle Parish, we will take time to adjust the seating within our many worship spaces in accordance with the new policies. The implementation of these **increased attendance numbers** will begin the **weekend of October 17-18**. The parish will continue to live-stream all Masses that are celebrated at St. John and St. Mary. **Dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation continues in effect.**

Based upon the available capacity of our buildings, and to allow for social distancing, St. Paul the Apostle Parish will adjust its online registration in order to admit the following number of individuals (these counts must include the clergy, the sacristans, the readers, the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, the greeters, and the musicians):

St. Gabriel Church: increases from 40 to 45 (Sunday @ 8:30 a.m.)

St. John Church: increases from 50 to 100
(Saturday @ 4:00 p.m.; Sunday @ 10:30 a.m.)

St. John Church Hall: increases from 50 to 90
(Saturday @ 4:00 p.m.; Sunday @ 10:30 a.m.) – with Holy Communion

St. Joseph Church: increases from 50 to 60
(Saturday @ 4:00 p.m.)

St. Mary Church: increases from 50 to 90
(Sunday @ 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.)

St. Mary Church Hall: remains at 50
(Sunday @ 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.) – with Holy Communion

St. Matthew Church: increases from 50 to 75
(Sunday @ 10:30 a.m.)

St. Matthew Church Hall: remains at 50
(Sunday @ 10:30 a.m., reserved for families with children in faith formation) – with Holy Communion

St. Teresa Church: increases from 50 to 70
(Sunday @ 5:30 p.m.)

The celebration of Mass, even under “normal” circumstances, depends on the faithful answering their baptismal call and assisting with these various ministries. During these COVID-19 times, the need for greeters and sanitizers is absolutely essential, even critical, if Mass is to be offered in a manner that is safe for everyone who attends. Please consider volunteering - when you attend Mass, simply let the greeter know that you are willing to offer 10 minutes of your time to sanitize pews/seats after the Mass you have attended, and they will assist you with the necessary protocols.

Of course, the following restrictions and safeguards for all worshipers will remain in effect, including:

Pew seating arrangements will maintain that each person/family/household is at least six feet from the next grouping.

Masks are to be worn by all those attending Mass as an act of charity that expresses our desire to protect one another against the projection of respiratory particles.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are positioned in churches.

Communion is offered with social-distancing guidelines (six feet between recipients). The distribution of the Precious Blood (consecrated wine) for the faithful is still suspended.

Seats and pews are sanitized after each Mass.

All pews, knobs, door handles, bathrooms, altars, musical equipment, and touched surfaces are cleaned after Masses.

In addition, parishes will continue to keep track of attendance in a variety of ways, including sign-in sheets and online registration. For more information about the Diocese of Portland's contact tracing policy, visit portlanddiocese.org/ContactTracingCompliance.

As Bishop Deeley has stated, "Adhering to diocesan and CDC guidelines have enabled the successful reopening of our churches without incident. After careful consideration and discussion, we have concluded that our worship spaces are large enough to permit additional participants at Masses."

"See you in Church!"

Peace and blessings,

Msgr. Andrew