



COMING BACK TO THE TABLE

Diocesan Guide to the Public Celebration of the Mass



Updated 9 June 2020



*“My heart is moved with pity for the crowd,
for they have been with me now for three days
and have nothing to eat.”*

MATTHEW 15:32



*“Our desire for the Bread of Life awakens in all the
faithful a longing to be more a part of the mystery of
the Lord’s death and resurrection, the essence of our
Lord’s gift to us on the night before He died for us.”*

BISHOP JAIME SOTO



General Principles

The Eucharist is an essential part of the life of every baptized Catholic, and the Church has the obligation to properly administer the sacrament to the faithful.

Ensuring the health of each person in our Church is a collective responsibility, we all need to take prudent and practical actions in coming back together, mindful of the role we play in preventing the further spread of COVID-19.

It is important to give serious consideration to the safety recommendations given by medical experts, local, county, and state officials.

As we return to the public celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we should all expect changes that reflect the needs of the current situation. All of these are held together with a three-fold approach: oneself, our church buildings, and the actual celebration of Holy Mass.

All are called to greater patience, charity and understanding during the transition.



*Bishop Jaime Soto will lift the suspension
of the public celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass
in the Diocese of Sacramento on Monday, June 8, 2020.*

*All parishes in the Diocese of Sacramento will resume
the public celebration of Sunday Mass on June 14, 2020,
the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.*



Preparing Ourselves to Return to Public Mass

Each should consider his or her own health. Those over 65 or with a vulnerable condition should shelter-in-place. Each person must make a prudent decision, for this reason the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass issued by Bishop Soto remains in force.

While understanding the prominence of the Sunday Mass, the faithful are encouraged to attend Mass during the week as these usually have smaller crowds.

Observance of the Third Commandment of keeping the Lord's Day Holy is to be kept in mind always. The faithful should incorporate pious practices which help to sanctify the Lord's Day. For example: the recitation of the rosary, reading of scripture, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, and communal family meals.

The use of masks is required for all attending Mass and must be worn the whole time, except for children under two years of age and anyone who has difficulty breathing.

Prepare ahead of time by checking your parish schedule of Masses. The current number of people allowed for each Mass is the lower number of either 25% of building capacity or a maximum of 100 congregants, including the priest, deacon, and other ministers. Please abide by the system that has been set up by the parish to manage the number of congregants per Mass.



Be Your Brother & Sister's Keeper...

If you are feeling sick or exhibiting symptoms,
PLEASE STAY AT HOME.

If you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19,
PLEASE STAY AT HOME.

If you are not feeling well,
PLEASE STAY AT HOME.

**Symptoms that need to be given serious attention
and require the exercise of caution:**

- Temperature above 100.4 F
- Cough or sore throat
- Recent loss of smell or taste
- Chills
- New muscle aches
- Gastrointestinal upset and diarrhea

Each parish has set up a system for contact tracing in case a congregant at a Mass tests positive for COVID-19.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please notify the parish IMMEDIATELY in order to initiate contact tracing procedures.



What to Expect at the Church

While we are eager to return to church and enjoy our parish community, we still have to make some modifications.

Physical distancing remains the norm. Six feet of space needs to be kept between individuals or families and other families or individuals. Things like seating, entrances and exits may be different. Be sure to follow any instructions or signs posted to help you with these changes.

Socializing and fellowship after Mass should be avoided if possible or at least minimized.

Churches will need to be sanitized after each Mass. Things like missalettes, hymnals and other shared material will be removed from our churches. Be sure to take advantage of hand sanitizer when it is available.



What to Expect During the Celebration of Holy Mass

Physical Distancing must always be observed! We will see some changes in how things are done or who does them. Those over 65 and those with vulnerable conditions are asked to allow others to fill liturgical roles, for the time being.

Please remember not to hold hands during the Our Father. The exchange of the Sign of Peace during Mass is still suspended.

It is encouraged to receive Holy Communion in the hand. Upon receiving the Body of Christ, the communicant is to step to one side and consume. Take advantage of hand sanitizer if it is available.

Follow whatever exit instructions you have been given. Don't be disappointed if Father doesn't greet you after Mass, he's trying to be a good example.



As we adapt to these changes, all are called to greater charity and understanding during the transition.

*Let our hearts be thankful that once again
we may gather for Holy Mass
and receive the Lord in Holy Communion!*

