

NEW PANDEMIC PROTOCOLS particular to St. Joseph, Augusta, effective Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021

Introduction

- Georgia has relaxed restrictions in public places with regard to capacity requirements and physical distancing.
- It is expected that all parishes will be fully open by August 9, 2021.
- Let us move forward with a sense of unity and hope.

New Protocols

- All blue tape markings and ropes will be removed.
- The diocese recommends maintaining at least three feet of distance between households. Singles and heads of households are responsible for distancing decisions and showing respect for others.
- The diocese recommends wearing masks inside churches and other parish buildings. Again, singles and heads of households are responsible for mask usage showing respect for others.
- We will have Holy Water in the entrance of the church, and the water will be changed before Saturday vigil Mass and before Monday morning Mass.
- Hymnals and missals will be at the pews as available. Again, singles and heads of household are responsible for persons deciding to use or handle these items.
- Hand sanitizer will remain available at church entrances, but we will no longer disinfect surfaces.
- Ushers and greeters will refrain from shaking hands as people enter and exit.
- We will resume having the Offertory Procession with the bread and wine.
- We will not take up the collection, but instead will continue using the drop-box in the narthex, online deposits, and mailed contributions.
- We will continue exercising restraint at the Sign of Peace by refraining from direct contact with those outside the household unit.
- Persons will wear masks while distributing Holy Communion and will sanitize their hands before and after distribution.
- If reasonably possible, persons receiving Holy Communion on the tongue ought to present themselves for Communion after those persons receiving on the hand. Ministers will not refuse giving on the tongue nor leave their station to purify their hands.
- The distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful remains suspended.
- We want to resume altar servers, but we first need an altar server coordinator.
- On a case-by-case basis, gatherings outside of Mass may take place with individually wrapped food items and observation of the previously-noted physical distancing protocols.
- The drinking fountains will be returned to service, but they will not be disinfected and persons use them at risk.

For those choosing not to participate in Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of obligation, the limited guidelines of 29 November 2020 remain, notably dispensing the obligation only for those who belong to vulnerable populations due to age or health; to caregivers and those who live with those in vulnerable populations; to those who are sick or have symptoms; and to those who suffer from extreme uneasiness or anxiety from being in any public places in this time of pandemic.