



Dear MBS Parishioners,

By now, most of you are aware that MBS Church may gradually begin a limited return to masses. Bishop Duca has allowed the starting dates to be this weekend, 5/16-17 or next weekend, 5/23-24. I have chosen the latter. On Memorial Day weekend, May 23-24, our regular weekend schedule will begin. It will be anything BUT REGULAR, as you will know reading the guidelines. There will be no more than 250 gathered (throughout our church) and you will notice, not a whole lot of choices going on. But first, here is a reprint from Bishop Duca that might ease any anxiety and or at least answer a question or two.

“The Sunday Mass obligation continues to be dispensed for all Catholics indefinitely. Those who are ill or who are not feeling well in any way should not attend Mass until they are free of their illness and its symptoms for three days. Those who are especially vulnerable (namely, those defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as those 60 years of age or older, those with compromised immune systems, and/or those with underlying health conditions), and indeed anyone who does not feel comfortable attending Mass are encouraged to stay home. Where possible, Sunday and daily Masses will continue to be streamed for those who are not yet comfortable, for any reason, with returning to a public Mass.”

This is me, now: for the last couple of months, every Catholic was dispensed from mass attendance. Well, there was no community mass in church, thus no obligation, no “sin.” In this limited return, this dispensation stays the same. Under the current circumstances, no obligation, no sin. You may miss coming to mass, and want to come to mass, and maybe can’t get in because of the 250 thing. The dispensation removes the obligation (reread Bishop Duca’s statement above). Once again, TV and online masses will continue if one so chooses and finds consolation in them.

Regularly scheduled confessions return on May 23rd from 3-4pm. Masks and social distancing required. On Wednesday, May 27th, we will have a daily mass at 8:45am, and then see where we go after that.

This pandemic has and will continue to test our insecurities, impatience, and desires for normalcy. Responses and reactions need some self-awareness. Some humility before a virus is helpful or it is in the spiritual life. Be assured of the prayers and support from me and all of our MBS staff. Fr. Blanchard is doing well, and staying safe, and sends his best.

Once you have decided that you and your loved ones are comfortable gathering in our church, we ask that you familiarize yourself with our new guidelines below. Thank you for your patience as we work through this phase of coming back to celebrate the Eucharist as a church parish. Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, our Bishop has issued guidelines that all parishes must implement.

Fr. Phil

Guidelines to return to Mass

Attending Mass

- First, you will need to sign up on our website each week to attend mass. The reservations will begin each Wednesday. In respect to those who do not have internet access, we have reserved spots for some call-ins. Please call the church office at 225.752.6230. Leave a message with the date and time of the mass you wish to attend, as well as the number of people in your family who will attend. Additional spaces will be available depending on these call-ins.
- Before you arrive at mass, we ask that you wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.

- For those 10 years and up, face coverings are required on campus and during mass.
- Enter the church through the front doors of the church (facing Jefferson Hwy). All other doors will remain locked. The front doors will be opened twenty minutes before mass begins, and someone will greet you, check you in, and ensure your face is covered before entry.
- Our Liturgical Team will help seat you from the front towards the back. To keep social distancing guidelines, your seating will not be by choice. We will fill the church from front to back, skipping every other pew. In the Church, you will find that rows of pews are taped off and that families and individuals will be expected to keep an appropriate distance (6ft) from one another.
- Please note that the rear narthex (cry room) will only be used as a pathway to the bathroom. No parishioner will be allowed to sit there for mass.
- All Liturgical Team Members will be wearing face coverings.
- There will be no Altar Servers or Choir.

Receiving Communion

- Please bring your own Hand Sanitizer to use before you receive Holy Communion. The chalice will not be distributed at this time.
- Communion from the hand is encouraged as a better, safer practice than receiving on the tongue.
- We ask that you take the host and walk to the picture taped to the floor. There, you can consume the Eucharist, refasten your face covering, and then return to your pew.
- Please use your Hand Sanitizer again after receiving Holy Communion.
- Eucharistic Ministers will use anti-bacterial hand sanitizer before and after communion. If they need it during communion, it will be provided.
- The Liturgical Team Members will help with the procession line and will ensure we proceed reverently and safely as we can for ourselves and for the ministers distributing Communion.

Leaving Church

- After the final blessing, parishioners must remain in their pews. We ask that you keep the kneeler down for cleaning purposes. Dismissal will be in an orderly fashion, one pew at a time, starting in the rear and front of the church simultaneously and then moving to the center. All exits will be utilized for departure.
- You may drop your offertory at each exit upon your departure. Clergy will not be available for congregation in the rear of the church. They will remain in the front of the church sanctuary.
- Please do not congregate outside. Head directly to your vehicle to allow for the next mass to begin on time.

Church Cleanliness

- After each Mass, sanitizing of church pews, kneelers, and bathrooms will take place by our Safe Environment Committee.
- The Church doors will be closed once the Church has reached its capacity.
- There is no hand holding or physical contact during the Our Father. The Sign of Peace is done by a simple gesture or bow.
- No hymnals or reusable song sheets are to be used.
- The Baptismal font and bowls of holy water will be empty.
- Prayer cards or other spiritual devotions will be removed from the Narthex.

At this time, the Adoration Chapel as well as the Church Parish facilities will remain closed.