



ST. MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Serving the Needs of God's People Since 1949

Serving

May 27, 2020

To all St. Mary Magdalene Liturgical Ministers:

This weekend we will be returning to the public celebration of weekend liturgies. I thought it might be helpful to give you an overview of what to expect. I'm sure these plans will evolve over the next few weeks, but here's what we anticipate this weekend:

Everyone is asked to enter through the Gathering Area, and to wear a mask while inside SMM facilities. If you are not feeling well, (even if you are scheduled) please stay home. (If you are scheduled, text or call my cell to let me know.) Remember that the obligation to attend Sunday and holy day Masses has been dispensed until further notice.

Although we are known for our hospitality, for now we ask that you follow the directions of the ushers upon entering the church, and proceed to your seat. Both the processional and recessional are simple, and include only Father. Therefore, all liturgical ministers can remain at their places throughout the entire liturgy.

There will be no congregational singing, so all of the responses are recited. This means that lectors will need to proclaim the Responsorial Psalm as well as the first and second readings. Father will handle the Universal Prayer, which will be scaled back. Lectors will remove their masks while proclaiming, then put them back on when finished.

There is no offertory procession, and there will simply be a basket out for the collection (rather than passing it.) We have designated a person at each Mass to be responsible for handling the collection.

At Communion, rather than a procession, Father or the designated minister will distribute Eucharist by walking pew to pew. Father will be on the Gathering Area side; Deacon Carl or the assigned Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will distribute to the center section and the chapel side. (If that person finishes first, they will help out on the Gathering Area side.) An usher will accompany Father and the other Communion minister with a bottle of hand sanitizer, in case need arises due to accidental contact. The assembly is asked to remain standing (as they are able) until all have received. Communion is only under one species – no Precious Blood.

When Mass is over, dismissal will be orderly. Following the direction of the ushers, we are asking folks on the chapel side and the center section to leave via the outside (window) aisles. Folks on the Gathering Area side will be dismissed out the center aisle, beginning with the pews closest to the Gathering Area. The ushers will help guide dismissal. We ask you to respect social distancing. There is blue tape on the ground marking 6-foot intervals.

We are so blessed that all of you liturgical ministers are very generous with your time, talent, and treasure, and I know you want to help in any ways you can. However, these are uncharted waters, and we are trying to respect the directives that we have been given. One of those is to minimize the number of people touching items. So, for example, the hymnals have been removed from the church, and we are not using the Lectionary, nor the Book of



the Gospels. (Lectors will be provided disposable copies of the readings for their scheduled Masses.) At the end of Mass, the sacred vessels will remain in the sanctuary until Father retrieves them to wash them. Designated maintenance staff will sanitize the church after each Mass. While we appreciate your offers to help, they have been trained and have a specific process – and so any volunteers (if needed) will be utilized only under the direction and training of these maintenance members.

We miss seeing each other, and will want to catch up. However, we ask that you exit the Gathering Area immediately after Mass and move the conversations outside, maintaining proper distance. This will facilitate our maintenance staff's ability to sanitize the church in preparation for the next Mass. In addition, studies have shown that the Coronavirus has a much shorter half-life outside in heat and sunshine than inside the Church interior environment.

Some have asked about the decision to restrict congregational singing, and I want to assure you this decision was not made lightly. I have participated in many webinars and researched countless studies, and all echo scientific facts that aerosolized droplets travel about 6 feet when one is speaking, but as much as 27 feet when one is singing. And those who sing while wearing a mask can experience headache, shortness of breath, and an exacerbation of existing conditions. If we love one another, we must protect one another by doing our best to respect the diocesan and governor's guidelines. For now, this means no congregational singing.

Looking ahead, I plan to use MSP to schedule liturgical ministers beginning the weekend of June 20-21. If you are not ready to come back, please indicate your preferences in MSP so that the schedule can reflect them accordingly. For now, we are using significantly fewer ministers per Mass, so those who are able and willing to serve will likely be scheduled less frequently than in the past. Everyone's situation is different, and we again encourage you to make the best decisions for you, whether that is returning now or waiting a while.

Finally, I know this is a very challenging time. Things will feel different. It can be tempting to dwell on how much has changed, and how restrictive these times feel. I encourage you to focus on what we CAN do, rather than what we can't. We are blessed to be able to gather once again to receive Eucharist. I think we have all experienced moments of grace as we have navigated things like Zoom and finding live-streamed prayer opportunities. We've been blessed to hear from our pastor every day, and many have commented that they feel like they've gotten to know Father Breck better through his daily emails. Perhaps we have even been given insight into our true values, or appreciated a bit more rest during the downtime.

You folks are the leaders of our worship, and others look to you for example. Thank you for your support, your faithfulness, and your ministry. If there is any way that I can make your ministry more fruitful, please let me know. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact me. If you come to Mass this weekend and have a thought on how we could do things better, please share your ideas with me! We're all in this together.

Know that I continue to hold you all in prayer.

In Christ,

Mary S. Hrich
Director of Liturgy and Music