



Hello Everyone,

I'm very pleased to report that we are getting very close to reopening our parishes. Thanks to a lot of hard work by our Archdiocese and our parish staff, we should be returning to Mass at our parishes by next weekend (but please, keep praying!). I'm relieved and excited, but some of the measures we will be taking to ensure safety will make things a bit different and I want to prepare you for them. You can read the entire document that is guiding these decisions here ([seattlearchdiocese.org/...](https://seattlearchdiocese.org/)), but for those of you who are not in the mood to read 18 pages of safety precautions and liturgical changes, I will summarize them here.

- One of the biggest changes is that the congregation will not be singing. This is because scientific studies link the spread of the Coronavirus to droplets that pass through the air. Speaking loud or singing has been linked to at least one outbreak in our state: [cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/6...](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/6...)
- All parishioners are going to be asked to wear face coverings. If you are like me you may have noticed that not being able to see a person's face when they speak can be a little distracting and frustrating. It is important that we see another person's lips move when they are communicating with us, especially for the hearing impaired. For this reason, the priest will usually not be wearing face coverings during the Mass. The trade off is that he will maintain physical distance of at least twelve feet from others, rather than the standard six feet. The exception will be that the priest will wear face coverings when he distributes communion. To see more of the rationale for this, please see appendix B the 18 page document linked above.
- Another change is that communion will happen after the final blessing. What will happen is that the priest will receive communion and give the final blessing for the Mass and say the familiar words, "Go in peace." He will then put a face covering on and move to the center aisle. Directed by ushers. The parishioners will come

forward, remove their face coverings, receive communion, and then immediately leave the Church and go to their cars.

- Of course, communion will only be distributed on the hand, per the bishop's request. However, we ask that you not wear any type of glove when you receive communion. The priest will sanitize his hands before distributing communion and should the priest accidentally come in contact with the skin of another person, he will sanitize his hands again. This has been shown to be sufficient to protect against the virus and thus, out of reverence to the blessed sacrament, wearing gloves while receiving communion will not be permitted.
- We are also asking that all of our parishioners screen their health before they come to Mass. We will be sending out further documentation about this later, but the original warning remains which is that if you feel ill if you have symptoms or if you have been in contact with a confirmed case of the Coronavirus without proper protection equipment, it would be best to stay home out of respect for your fellow parishioners.

I think that about covers all of the highlights. When your turn comes for you to attend Mass we will be emailing you some more detailed instructions. Sadly, the amount of people who can actually be in the building at the same time is going to be limited to about fifty people per Mass and we will have to restrict attendance. Some have already expressed their disgust over this practice, but it is not the first time a limited number of spaces has been available. In fact, if you wanted to attend Mass at St. Peter's basilica or even a priest ordination in our own diocese, you would be turned away unless you had been given permission in advance. It's just the way it is because space is in fact a limited resource.

Now, you might be asking, when is it your turn and how are we determining who attends when? Well, the primary way we will do this is by lottery. If you indicated in our parish survey that you hope to attend Mass as soon as possible or if you informed us of the same through a different means of communication, you were entered. We will select names at random and start filling spaces.

We will contact you when your name is selected, so please do not contact us.

If you have not taken this survey, or if you would like to change your answer for any reason, you can visit this link here: docs.google.com/forms/...

Our goal is that when we get up and running fully, every parishioner who wants to attend Mass will be given the opportunity to attend every week. It might not be on a

Sunday. The Mass you are able to attend might be on a week day, but I believe we will be able to get everyone who feels safe attending Mass into Mass once a week.

Still, we are not quite there. We will be doing our first Masses very soon and will expand the availability over time. Starting small and growing slowly more complex will help us to ensure a safe and prayerful experience for our parishioners. So, I know you've all been so patient, but please hang in there just a little longer. We are almost there!

Thank you and God Bless!

Fr. Bryan