

Dear folks:

The Archdiocese of Saint Louis came out with new Covid-19 guidelines for Masses and public gatherings. All parishes/pastors received an email from the Archdiocese outlining what protocols are to be instituted. Bullet points which begin on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>:

## **-Archdiocese of Saint Louis Covid-19 Protocols-**

- The capacity restrictions for all parish Churches celebrating public Masses in Saint Louis County moves from 50% to 25%. This is to be the norm until further notice. Saint Louis City is holding at 50% capacity for now.
- 25% capacity for Saint Mary Magdalen is between 114—120 people.
- Masks are required for attending Church services; this is a mandate. If a person forgets his/her mask while entering into Church, in the Church sacristy are extra masks.
- Holy Communion on the tongue is allowed but only by the clergy of the parish.
- Everyone is encouraged to respect physical distancing guidelines between family groups in the pews. No choirs or bands; only cantors can be used.
- Parishioners and clergy who are symptomatic or who have been exposed to another with the virus should not come to Church, in accordance with national, state, and local health directives.
- Anyone over 60 years old and those with underlying health conditions are encouraged to participate in Masses via **Livestreaming** only; the Archbishop has granted a dispensation from the requirement to attend Mass on Sunday's.
- In Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County, all gatherings on parish grounds outside of the celebration of Holy Mass need to be limited to 10 people or fewer. If a parish currently has gatherings booked that include more than 10 people, we ask you to consider **Livestreaming** or cancelling the event.

- While Saint Louis County has alluded to an end date for these restrictions—4 weeks from Tuesday—it is possible that these restrictions will be extended. All parishes are asked to plan accordingly, with Christmas Masses and gatherings in mind. Any update prior to that time will be shared with all of you as quickly as possible, as information becomes available, and scheduling adjustments necessary.

Please brothers and sisters, I know people are frustrated and angry and disappointed; I am also very much frustrated by this. Let us not lose faith. We will get through this! If there is anything that history teaches us about times of crisis, faith increases and the Church gets stronger!!! Please don't despair. Let this time increase our faith and devotion to God. Jesus Christ showed us this example when faced with stubborn obstacles, strong obstructions, and overwhelming resistance. Let us follow His example from the Garden of Gethsemane to Easter Sunday!

Also, the parish Church, meeting rooms, bathrooms, parish offices and the Saint Joseph Chapel are all being mitigated with a spray that lasts for 2 weeks; also, the pews in the Church are being wiped down on a regular basis. The school gets cleaned and sterilized every night!

Fr. Jack Siefert