

Dear St Paul of the Cross Parishioners,

We are approved to resume public Masses, which will begin next week. Given the current restrictions on attendance (up to 20% capacity of our church), we are using SignUpGenius, an online tool that allows you to reserve space for you and those in your household for Mass. Please familiarize yourself with the Parishioner Reopening Guide so that you are aware of the precautionary measures in place for your safety and all those in our family. You will see that there are some expectations of everyone prior to arriving for Mass, during our celebration and upon exiting the church. To help ensure that everything runs as smoothly and peacefully as possible, please review the guide and contact us with any questions ahead of time at 847-825-7605.

As we have done so far, we are overly cautious in order to protect our vulnerable population. We will start with daily Mass once a day, starting on Monday June 15. The Mass will be in the upper church at 8 am. We are allowed to have only 50 people at that Mass. Please know that reservations are required. You can reserve your spot either on-line on SignUpGenius or by calling the church at 847-825-7605. We have a few spots reserved for those who call in. Seats will be filled on a first-come first-served basis.

We are encouraging those in the vulnerable cohort (elderly with frail health, those whose immune systems are compromised in any way) not to attend Mass. Following the various requirements may be challenging for those who have mobility issues. We are also inviting them not to attend Mass at this time. Within the next few weeks we will arrange for a Mass in our parking lot specifically for you. You can remain in your cars and the priest will bring Communion to you. The bishops of the US have dispensed Catholics from attending Mass until further notice. We will continue to post a recording of a Mass daily on our website. We will also live-stream a weekend Mass on Facebook Live.

Once you have reserved your spot, please come to daily Mass about 10 to 15 minutes before 8 am and line up outside the church at the main parking lot entrance (Washington St side). Volunteers will guide you and they will seat you. Families can sit together. Seats are clearly marked. If you have your offertory envelope with you, you can place it in our baptismal font before you take your seat. If you have special needs please call the rectory ahead of time so that someone can assist you.

During Mass the priest will instruct you as to how to receive Communion. Everyone should wear a mask at all times and maintain social distancing. Once the Mass is over, you will be asked to leave through the exit on St Joseph's side (the handicapped entrance). The front doors of the church will be shut. Please note that the restrooms are not available in the church. People cannot linger in the church for private prayer. On many days we have funerals scheduled and we need to clean and disinfect the church. Due to the virus, we have not had funerals in the church over the last several months. We are also scheduling baptisms and weddings. As a result, the church liturgical calendar is starting to get filled.

After celebrating daily Mass from June 15 to 19, we will be able to have Masses on the weekend. We will have one Mass on Saturday at 4:30 pm and two Masses on Sunday at 7:30 am and 10:30 am. We are permitted to fill our church up to 15 to 20% capacity and in order to maintain social distancing we can accommodate 150 people for a weekend Mass. Once again reservations are required. Families can be seated together. The protocols for the weekend Masses are the same as for the weekday Masses. There is, however, one exception. Volunteers will be at two entrances: the front entrance on Mary's side (NW Hwy) and main parking lot entrance (Washington St). They will guide you and take you to your seat. There is no congregational singing. We have removed our hymnals and missalettes.

At the end of Mass ushers will guide you to exit the church on St Joseph's side (Handicapped exit and NW Hwy).

Once we have done Masses for a couple of weeks, we will gradually increase the number. We will be able to hold Masses in the gym and also in the Holy Family Chapel. We want to learn from our experience of the first couple of weeks. We will keep you updated.

We expect that many parishioners will want to attend Mass and the seats are very limited. And so I kindly request that we make it possible for many of our parishioners to come to Mass. Hopefully as we follow the guidelines of the archdiocese, in a month or so we can increase the number of attendees.

As we are back in church for Mass, private prayer time is no longer available. Since we are starting to schedule funerals and weddings on Saturdays, we have to change our schedule for confessions. We will hear confessions on Wednesdays from 3 to 4 pm and on Saturdays from 8 to 9 am.

Here is the updated liturgical schedule:

Daily Mass	Monday through Friday	8 am (50 people)
Weekend	Saturday	4:30 pm (150 people)
	Sunday	7:30 am and 10:30 am (150 people each)
Confessions	Wednesday	3 to 4 pm
	Saturday	8 to 9 am
Funerals	Monday through Saturday	Mornings
Weddings	Friday and Saturday	
Baptisms	Saturday and Sunday	

There is a lot to digest. Thank you for your patience and understanding. I want to remind you that we need your financial support. Our bills have not stopped. We are paying all our staff. Certain ministries are continuing even though in a limited fashion. Our food pantry is very busy. Last month we distributed food to over 180 households. I am leading a virtual Bible Study on the Gospel of Matthew that is well-attended. Please support your parish on-line or by sending your envelopes by US mail. I am deeply grateful and I pray for you and your loved ones every day.

We have been doing a lot of work behind the scenes. Some members of our staff have been super busy working out all the details for the reopening and taking care of things. I thank them sincerely. I am grateful to our Leadership Team that has enabled us to reopen safely and efficiently. May the Good Lord reward them all! Please keep us in your prayers.

Yours warmly,

Fr Britto