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May 11, 2020

Dear Brother Priests:

Effective May 16, public Mass can be celebrated in church using 25% of the occupancy of the church.

Please follow the guidelines listed below:

1. The people of the Archdiocese are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.
2. If someone is vulnerable and not feeling well, they should not celebrate Mass in church with other people.
3. Attendance at Mass:
The number of people who can gather in the church is 25% of the occupancy of the church. This applies also to Baptisms, Weddings, funerals and receiving candidates who are to enter the church. This number will increase gradually.
4. First Communion can be celebrated with 25% occupancy on Sunday or a weekday.
5. For those who feel obliged to fulfill the Sunday obligation, a weekday Mass could accomplish this.
6. Additional Vigil Masses, Sunday and weekday Masses may be added to accommodate more people.
7. Either by computer, or by phone, people could make reservations to attend a specific Mass.
8. Ushers must do their best to enforce the 25% occupancy rule.
9. A specific Mass could be designated for the elderly who are in good health.
10. Family members may sit in the same pew.
11. Social distancing must be observed – 6 feet apart. (This may necessitate roping off pews or putting markers for people to sit.) Six feet apart applies to the communion line as well.
12. Holy water fonts should be empty.
13. Make sure all ministers (clergy and lay) observe proper hygiene of their hands.

14. Encourage people to wear a mask for Mass.

15. Regarding the celebration of Mass:

- a. The priest, deacons and EMHC should wear a mask at communion.
- b. Give communion with no bodily contact. Gently let the host touch the person's hand and drop it in their hand without touching them.
- c. Communion on the tongue is not encouraged but permitted.
- d. The chalice with the precious blood is not to be offered.
- e. The sign of peace can be given by bowing to the other person.
- f. As people depart from Mass, social distancing must be observed.

16. Outdoor Masses may be celebrated and there is no maximum number of attendees, however the 6 feet rule of social distancing must be observed.

- Please follow the guidelines of the State Fire Marshal which you received on May 3.
- Please create a dignified environment for the celebration of the Mass.

17. Some have inquired about offering communion for those who cannot be accommodated in the church or who are fearful to gather. Communion may be offered to others after Mass. It is strongly suggested that communion not be given to those in vehicles, but outside where people can form a communion line and observe social distancing – 6 feet apart. It is better to do this in an open space rather than in a church or in cars. Please use your pastoral judgement.

Once again, thank you for your patience, cooperation and understanding. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me. You have been dedicated and creative in serving God's people during this critical time.

God's peace be with you and those you serve in his name.

Wishing you God's blessings, I am

Fraternally in Christ,



Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans

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