



May 24, 2020

The Ascension of the Lord

Dear Parishioners,

We have some very positive news to share this week. OLPH Parish will offer Sunday Masses with congregations – limited to 50 people – starting this weekend, May 23/24.

Mass times are as usual - Saturday Mass (anticipated) 5pm, Sunday Masses at 9am, 11am and 5pm.

The COVID-19 pandemic still presents a serious threat to physical health. Our provincial authorities discourage unnecessary activities outside the home and continue to call for physical distancing, frequent handwashing, appropriate use of masks and the limiting of public gatherings to no more than 50.

For us Catholics access to the Eucharist and the Church's full sacramental life is of the utmost importance to our spiritual well-being, hence the opening of our churches with some restrictions will apply.

All the faithful in the Archdiocese of Vancouver remain dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass during this initial reopening phase. They are also not required to attend a weekday Mass in place of the Sunday Liturgy.

## PARISH MEASURES

In keeping with the directives of the Archdiocese of Vancouver regarding safety of parishioners attending Mass, the parish is taking several measures.

- i. To follow the set limit of 50 attendees only, as well as to enable contact tracing should this be necessary, all who wish to attend Mass will be asked to use the Sign-up link. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/olphmass>. This link is available on the parish website. Please go to WORSHIP/Mass Sign-Up.
- ii. Names of those who have signed-up will be checked off before admittance into the church 15 minutes before Mass starts. Only those who have signed up will be admitted. If you have trouble signing up using the link, please call the parish office.
- iii. Anyone with signs of a cold or other flu-like symptoms will be turned away by the usher.
- iv. Hand sanitizers are available at the entrance of the church. The use of masks is left to individual discretion. If masks are used, they are not to be removed and left in the pew during Communion. Ushers will be checking to ensure these instructions are being followed.
- v. The parish has arranged for the sanitizing of pews after each Mass.

- vi. Safe distance seating will be marked in the pews. However, people from the same household can sit together.
- vii. Those receiving Communion must line-up at distanced markers indicated on the aisle.
- viii. The priest will sanitize his hands and wear a mask before he distributes Communion. If there is skin contact, he will sanitize his hands before continuing to give Communion to the next person.
- ix. Washroom facilities will not be available unless it is an emergency.

## **RISKS & RESTRICTIONS**

Despite these measures, please understand that anyone attending Mass does so at their own risk.

2a. The following must stay home for the sake of the wider community:

- i. People with COVID-19 or who live with someone with COVID-19.
- ii. People who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- iii. Those who have recently travelled outside of Canada.

b. The following are encouraged to stay home for the sake of the wider community:

- i. The sick, including those with even the slightest symptoms of the cold or flu.
- ii. People who live with someone with upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms.
- iii. People, especially the elderly, with underlying or compromised health conditions.
- iv. Family members who live with elderly people or those who are at risk.

Please understand that these measures need to be taken very seriously by all, in order for us to be able to gather safely to celebrate the Eucharist. For now, weekday Masses will not be available at OLPH because we are unable to ensure that the necessary safety measures will be in place on those days.

I look forward to welcoming you back to Mass even though our congregations will be smaller. Let us pray to our Blessed Mother of Perpetual Help that this situation will not last long. Let us also ask Mary for her intercession for the protection of our families, the recovery of those who are sick, the safety of all frontline workers, peaceful repose for those who have died and, most of all, the end of this pandemic.

Yours in Christ,

**Fr. Babu Mathew, CSsR**