

# **REVISED MASS ATTENDANCE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**(updated December 13, 2020)**

**SPECIAL THANKS to everyone for adhering to the guidelines which the state is asking us to follow.**

**REMINDER: Even though state guidelines are still recommended, masks and capacity limits for religious worship will no longer be enforceable because of a November Supreme Court ruling, a December Supreme Court order and November El Paso County statement (see details below).**

**Because of these court actions:**

- 1. We will no longer have assigned seating for Masses using group designations.**
- 2. The 8:00 am Mass will be for those who are more comfortable following the state guidelines like mask wearing.**
- 3. The 10:00 am Mass will be for everyone else.**
- 4. Instead of the single kneeler in the center at communion time we will use the altar rail for receiving Holy Communion.**
- 5. Continue to sit together as family units for the sake of social distancing.**

**In a statement on November 25, 2020, entitled “Faith-Based Organizations”, officials of the El Paso County Health Department informed the public that they will not be enforcing capacity limits or mask requirements on churches. Their document referenced the October 15, 2020, Colorado Federal Court (Civil Action No. 1:20-cv-02362-DDD-NRN) temporary injunction prohibiting enforcement in places of worship of these two restrictions: masks and capacity limits. The county added that “while these two restrictions are not at the present time enforceable in places of worship, we would like to reiterate the effectiveness of layering public health preventive measures and ask that people in places of worship voluntarily comply with” the items in the Postscript below.**

Also on November 25, 2020, the U. S. Supreme Court issued an injunction (592 U.S. \_\_[2020] 1; No. 20A87) against severe restrictions on religious services because:

1. they “violate ‘the minimum requirement of neutrality’ to religion”;
2. they “will cause irreparable harm. ‘The loss of First Amendment freedoms, for even minimal periods of time, unquestionably constitutes irreparable injury.’”
3. “it has not been shown that” not enforcing the restrictions “will harm the public”.

On December 3, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court issued an order ( Order List : 592 U.S. ) (20A94) which referred to its November 25, 2020 injunction (see above) and used it as a precedent in relaxing guidelines for churches in California.

In conjunction with the above and while making use of the data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on August 26, 2020, no one attending our Masses will be required to disregard any current state regulations.

Our Sunday Mass schedule is based on the El Paso County Variance dated June 5, 2020 and its reopening guidelines of August 3, 2020. Our chapel is a “critical service” as found in Colorado Orders D2020 044 and 20-28 and is open following their guidelines.

Chapel cleaning is on Mondays after the 8:30am Mass. Thank you for cleaning Our Lord’s home.

**SUNDAY MASS** – 8:00 am Sunday Mass is for those wanting to follow the state guidelines like mask wearing. The 10:00 am Mass is for everyone else. All Masses will have a sermon also.

**DAILY MASS** - Daily Mass does not require reserved seating in group designations as on Sundays. When at a daily Mass please kneel in the pews so that the orange tape is directly in front of you.

**The Daily Mass schedule is the following:**

**Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays – 8:30am only.**

**CONFESSIONS - Confessions will be heard on Saturday: 8:00am – 8:30am and on Sunday: 7:30am – 8:00am and 9:30am – 10:00am.**

**Also, Confessions are available for those requesting an appointment.**

## **PROTOCOLS FOR MASS AND CONFESSION**

- 1. Anyone who attends is responsible for his/her own health. Please remember to think of your neighbor's well-being as well. We cannot assume any responsibility for the health of participants.**
- 2. Our new Sunday Mass schedule is designed so that everyone has the opportunity to fulfill his Sunday obligation now.**
- 3. Please no sick persons nor those with symptoms of illness.**
- 4. Infants and children under seven (7) years of age who usually stay in the cry room (classroom) can attend with supervision by their parents.**
- 5. Please observe social distancing and please do not have any physical contact like handshaking with others at the chapel.**
- 6. Please enter only through the front door near the Holy Family statue and classroom and exit only through the chapel doors in the vestibule. Try to exit quietly and avoid doing so during Masses.**
- 7. Please park near the chapel and near the entrance door. You can use the parking islands. Do not park in the east parking lots.**
- 8. We have increased ventilation by propping open interior doors so fans will be circulating air for both Masses and confessions. Please wear a coat if you are sensitive to the cold.**
- 9. It is recommended to observe the six-foot social distancing rule and wear a mask.**

10. **The pews are marked with orange tape so to permit easy observance. Please kneel so that the orange tape is directly in front of you. We will be available to assist.**
11. **The restrooms may be used, but we ask that you use them one at a time, and do not form a line in the hallway. Disinfect the restroom after use. Hand sanitizers are available.**
12. **In addition to everything already explained, here is information about going to confession.**
13. **Confessions will be heard in Office A.**
14. **Enter Office A when able and close the door. Do not enter if you see through the window that a penitent is already there. Leave the door open when leaving.**
15. **Observe social distancing, etc., while waiting for confession near and in the classroom.**

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

- **We are not requiring that the priests and seminarians who come within six feet of others wear a face covering at all times (because of October 15, 2020 Colorado ruling) except at the 8:00am Sunday Mass. We will provide face coverings to the priests and seminarians.**
- **We have and will thoroughly clean and disinfect the facility prior to and following each Mass in accordance with CDC and state guidelines. Please assist with this if asked.**
- **We have invited our people individually by phone call and email/text to attend Mass. We explained the process to them, and the information herein contained.**
- **Reserved seating is not necessary for any Masses but social distancing is encouraged.**
- **We have marked the interior layout of the chapel with tape in accordance with the six-foot social distancing rule. Families can sit together, but there should be at least six feet distance between family units, and more if possible.**
- **We have planned one-way traffic in and out of the building, with a separate entrance door and exit door on opposite sides of the building.**

- We have posted signs on and within the facility that explain the service protocol.
- We have provided hand sanitizer throughout the facility.
- We will not pass anything like parish bulletins around the chapel, including the offering basket etc.
- We have removed the Holy Water fonts etc.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

The following has been recommended to us and we share this information with you:

- Take temperature, wear freshly washed clothing, refrain from drinking or eating before coming so as to avoid using the restrooms.
- Use the restroom prior to leaving home.
- Wash clothing following the service.
- Stay home for at least 14 days if you know you have come in contact with an individual – with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Wear your mask
- Practice social distancing by maintaining six feet of distance
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water (if soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol)
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently
- Stay home when you are sick
- If you are experiencing symptoms, seek testing. Information about community testing sites can be found here:

<https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/covid-19-testing-information>