



Happy Easter, East Central Oklahoma Catholics!

In order to prepare for the gradual reopening of our parishes, I am sending you an overview of the **changes that will take effect Tuesday, May 19**. Below you will find a list of guidelines and policies we will follow at St. Joseph Church in Ada and St. Francis Xavier Church in Sulphur.

Within the next few days, you will receive information about Mass times for both St. Joseph Church in Ada and St. Francis Xavier Church in Sulphur. We will need to temporarily amend our Mass times to accommodate the needs of each community, so **please be patient and flexible as we work to make the Eucharist accessible to you again.**

God willing, this chapter in the history of the Church will be short, but it is a chapter that must be read. Let us meet this challenge with charity and commitment. And let not your hearts be troubled.

Stay safe, be well, and God Bless

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Foster".

May 8th, 2020

<<<Timeline for the resumption of public Mass and sacramental life in accord with these procedures>>>

- Public Masses and other liturgies will resume **Tuesday, May 19** and Public Sunday Mass will resume on **May 23-24, 2020**.
- *(A letter with updated times and places will be sent within the next few days.)*

<<<The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended until further notice. Therefore: >>>

- Persons with health vulnerabilities are encouraged not to attend public Mass;
- Persons who are sick or feel sick ***MUST*** not attend public Mass;
- All other persons are encouraged to use their discretion;
- *Live-stream Mass will continue until a greater sense of normalcy returns.*
- Due to the current limitations placed upon public meeting sizes, we will have to restrict the number of people present in our facilities. Specifically, we will only be able to accommodate 33 percent of the capacity of our church buildings. While we intend to offer overflow seating at some Masses, there may be times when you will not be able to participate physically at Sunday Mass. Nonetheless, *you are encouraged to come to Mass during the week to receive Communion so as to receive the source and summit of the Faith.*

<<<Requirements for resumption of public Mass and sacramental life>>>

Preparation for Mass

- Pews/seats will be marked off to assure distance guidelines between household groups or individuals. Those attending Mass are encouraged to bring their own masks as well as their own sanitizer. Please, however, ***DO NOT*** use sanitation wipes on the pews, so as to avoid damaging them. The parish will also provide sanitizer at the entrance to the church. Doors to a single entrance to the church will be propped open before Mass, so that people do not need to touch doors as they enter.
- *It is highly recommended that those who have frequent and close contact with others should take extreme precautions to remain physically distant from other members of the parish faith community.*

- Parish staff, ushers, and volunteers will be needed to clean the church before Masses. So if you are under the age of 65 and in good health, please consider reaching out to the parish office to sign up to assist us.

Entering Church

- For St. Joseph Church in Ada, the entrance for Mass will be the central stained-glass doors on the front of the church. For St. Francis Xavier Church in Sulphur, the entrance for Mass will be the double doors on south side of the church proper. These entrances will be propped open so that those attending do not touch the doors as they enter. Sanitizer will be available at these entrances. You will be required to sanitize your hands as you enter the church.
- Households may sit together in a pew, but will, along with parishioners coming individually, need to maintain social distance norms. Everyone is strongly encouraged to wear masks (except for reception of Communion), but will be required to do so if experiencing coughs and sneezes for any reason.
- Visiting other pews/seats before, during or after Mass is prohibited.

Celebration of Mass

- To minimize movement of people in the church and at the ambo, the clergy and summer seminarian will serve as the lectors for the immediate future.
- No collection will be taken during Mass. Instead, a receptacle will be placed at the entrance/exit of the church for monetary offerings. In addition, we will continue to receive online giving. **Please consider giving online.** Go to
 - St. Joseph Ada giving: <https://stjosephada.com/giving/>
 - St. Francis Xavier giving: <https://sfxsulphur.org/give>
- The sign of peace between parishioners will be omitted. After the priest offers Christ's peace to the people and the people respond, the Mass will continue with the Lamb of God. Additionally, holding hands during the Lord's Prayer is prohibited for public safety purposes and because it is not a part of the Roman Rite.

Communion

- As suggested by Archdiocesan policy, we will move the Communion Rite for parishioners to after the final blessing so that people are not coming up to communion

and then returning to their pews/seats. Social distance norms must be maintained during reception of Holy Communion.

- As begun prior to lock down, the Eucharist will be received in the form of the Precious Body only. *You are strongly encouraged to receive the Eucharist in the hand.* This is a temporary measure during the pandemic and is an act of charity toward the ministers of Communion and the lay faithful in the Communion line. After the host is placed on the hand, the person receiving Communion should take two steps to the side before consuming the host. **If, however, you intend to receive Communion on the tongue, you are asked to wait until others have gone before, and enter Fr. Foshee's line to use the kneeler so that a more controlled distribution is easier for him.**

Exiting Mass

- *For St. Joseph Church in Ada*, the side (north) doors will be the designated exit. *For St. Francis Xavier Church in Sulphur*, the same doors for entry will be used for exiting. These doors will be propped open after Mass, so that those attending do not touch the doors as they leave. During the Communion Rite, you will be dismissed by pew/household unit by the ushers to ensure a staggered exit of persons attending Mass. *Please maintain social distancing norms while exiting.*