

Restrictions are slowly being lifted by the State of Illinois; however, we are to continue to follow the protocols that have been established by the bishops of our province in collaboration with the state and county health departments. Our local diocesan committee has released revised metrics for the celebration of daily and Sunday Masses, weddings and funerals, and social and professional gatherings. The document “Guidance for Parish Celebrations and Social Gatherings” is posted on the diocesan website under “Reopening Resources.”

I have briefly highlighted those sections that are of most concern to us:

REVISED METRICS FOR:

Daily and Sunday Masses –

- All liturgical celebrations must follow established protocols, e.g., capacity for seating, registrations, masks, social distancing, etc.
- The new metric for the celebration of daily or Sunday Masses will increase to 25% seating capacity with no cap on the number of people that can attend.
- We are currently at 25% seating capacity, though the cap has been eliminated, our churches are not large enough to accommodate additional people.
 - St. Joseph-Olney--80 people in the church, 40 people in the MPR room
 - Holy Cross-Wendelin—100 people
 - St. Lawrence-Lawrenceville—85 people
 - St. Joseph-Stringtown—45 people

The choir lofts and cry rooms are not available for additional seating.

- Musicians must be masked and maintain six feet of physical distance from each other.
- Singers / cantors can be used IF they are able to remain 10- 12 feet apart in all directions.
- No brass or wood wind instruments may be used.

Weddings and Funerals -

- Weddings and funerals in the context of Mass will also follow the metric of 25% seating capacity with no cap on the number of people that can attend. (see above) Established diocesan COVID-19 safety guidelines must be followed. No one should congregate in the church or gathering space before or after the celebration. No more than 50 people should congregate outdoors

before or after the ceremony. Social distancing and the wearing of masks are required even outdoors.

- The number of people who may gather at funeral vigils in church or at funeral homes is now 50 or fewer. Everyone must wear masks and those not living together should maintain social distance.

Social and Professional Gatherings –

- The use of our parish halls is limited to parish functions and events, we cannot accept private events and rentals at this time.
- Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan allows social or professional gatherings of 50% of capacity or 50 people, whichever is less. The limit of 50 guests applies to organizational meetings, receptions, funeral brunches, bingo, dinners, etc.
- If food and beverages are served, do not offer buffet-style or potluck meals or food prepared in the home of others. Please check with the county or state department of public health for food safety certification requirements. **Food items should be catered or provided in single-serve or disposable containers.** Items should not be left out in the open uncovered with multiple people accessing them such as bowls of snacks, food trays, etc. **Those not living together should be seated six feet or more apart.** Staff or volunteers serving should wash hands frequently and wear disposable gloves and face coverings.