

Holy Trinity Church
205 Glebe Street
Johnstown, New York 12095

Church of the Holy Spirit
153 S Main Street
Gloversville New York, 12078

May 28, 2021

Dear Parish Families of Holy Trinity Church & Church of the Holy Spirit

Springtime greetings to you and to your loved ones!

I am writing to you today to keep you in the loop regarding the latest updates on the requirements surrounding Mass attendance and what the current guidelines are at our parishes. As you may or may not know, our diocesan bishop is reinstating the Sunday obligation to attend Mass starting with the weekend of June 5th and 6th (The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ). This means that Catholics who are healthy and in a position to be able to attend Mass should begin making this a weekly priority once more. We miss seeing you in church and want to have you join us for worship.

I also want to point out that while the general dispensation that the bishop gave last March that allowed for people to use discretion in not attending weekend Masses if they so chose is now being lifted, the particular dispensation remains in effect. The particular dispensation allows those who are sick, have compromised immune systems, or are caregivers for those who are sick to not be obligated to return to weekly Mass. This is a long-standing practice that the church has held in order to convey a sense of pastoral concern for those whom weekly Mass attendance in a public setting would cause significant physical and/or emotional distress or potentially put their fellow church attendees in unnecessary harm's way.

For the time being, attendance at weekday and weekend Masses still means wearing masks when entering and exiting the church (except for while receiving communion) and keeping distance between ourselves and those who are not members of our households. That being said, the pastoral letter from the bishop allows for those who are vaccinated to sit next to each other and even remove their masks during Mass while in their pew provided that everyone in their pew has received their vaccination. In other words, we still need to be careful to not unnecessarily expose anyone to the virus due to an unintentional slip on our part in not covering our mouths and noses while around people who are vulnerable but there is some relaxation of previous facemask and distancing rules because of the vaccinations.

Thankfully, we are now able to bring back hymnals to the pews, have the gifts brought up the main aisle again, have altar servers and Eucharistic ministers at every Mass as well as see some other signs of normalcy. While we still have to be vigilant in not unintentionally spreading germs to one another (this includes frequent cleaning of regularly touched objects like railings, door knobs, etc), we can feel good about being able to worship together in an environment that is safer than it was last year at this time.

I am including the bishop's pastoral letter ("A Return to Mass") dated May 14th for your reference.

I wish you all the best this upcoming summer.

God Bless,

Fr. Matt