

Nothing Compares to Being There ***Saint Raymond continues to move Forward in Christ***

Archbishop Perez has initiated an effort to invite more people to return to worship at Saint Raymond and in Churches throughout the Archdiocese with the goal of having all those who worshipped with us before this pandemic (and more) “back in the pews” by Thanksgiving. Virtual worship and prayer over the phone are great. But, *nothing compares to being there*. In conjunction with this initiative of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and the recent announcements from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia, Saint Raymond Parish announces the following changes:

Effective the Feast of the Sacred Heart, Friday, June 11th:

- The “ropes” limiting seating in the center sections of the Church will be removed while those on the side pews will remain in place for those who wish to maintain greater social distancing while worshipping.
- Missals and hymnals will be returned to pews while we will continue to make use of the TV screens as appropriate. Your feedback is always appreciated.
- Hand sanitizer remains available at our entrances and all are encouraged to make use of it.
- Members of the Restore Team will remain available to assist our community as we worship each weekend. Over the summer we will envision a new team to welcome people to each Mass and assist in serving our Church Family during worship.
- Holy Water will be returned to the fonts while the current Holy Water containers will remain in place as well.
- Masks (or face coverings) are optional. In Christian charity, we respect the choice of those who wish to continue wearing a mask and the choice of those who feel confident that their vaccination provides the protection they need without wearing a mask. No one will be asked to provide “proof” of vaccination, consistent with the best practice of churches across our nation, we will rely on the good will of our fellow Christians.
- The Choir Loft (upstairs) will be reserved as a “Mask Required” and “Socially Distanced” Zone for those who wish to have a “safer” place.
- We will return to two lines for Holy Communion (Father Chris and Deacon Bill will remain masked for the distribution of Holy Communion); you will be guided forward as usual. We will not be offering the Precious Blood until further notice.
- We will re-instate the practice of having members of the congregation bring forward the bread and wine at the time of the offering.

In addition:

- In person Children’s Liturgy of the Word will return to the 10am Mass July 6th. We will use the basement of the Church to allow for greater spacing.
- We will continue to make use of the Tithe Boxes to receive your sacrificial gifts (as well as electronic giving methods). In July, we will introduce “walking the Church” to make your offering on the 3rd Sunday of the Month at all Masses.
- Kenny Arrington will work with the members of our choirs to make decisions about when and how additional singers are introduced. He is grateful for your patience and understanding as we return to a full complement of voices.

Father Chris and the Parish Staff are most grateful for your goodness throughout these long months of the pandemic. These policies will continue to be evaluated. If you have ideas, concerns or questions please contact the Parish Office at 215-549-3760 or email pastor@saintraymond.net so that together, we move forward in Christ!