



METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

"Pray without ceasing."

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Yes, the doors of our parishes will open, but we will not be able to fill our pews for many months. Whether you attend Divine Services in person, or you worship from home, please remain prayerful for we know that the Lord hears our petitions and He will provide for our every need!

"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

(Psalm 118:24)

Our hearts will be filled with joy and gratitude that we can once again be active participants in worship and partake of the Holy Eucharist. Whether we can attend church once a week or once a month, do not let your joy be diminished. The Lord knows what is in your heart and His "grace is sufficient" for us.

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong."

(1 Corinthians 6:13)

While the curve may be flattening, the risk of infection still exists. Please come to church prepared with a mask, use hand sanitizer, and follow the instructions of your parish leaders. Most of all, please be patient! We are all learning through this process and we are working diligently to fulfill the needs of our faithful while continuing to be mindful of the guidelines in each area of our Metropolis. We want to see our parishes fully re-engaged, but this can only be accomplished if we are careful and vigilant in following the directives of our leaders.

RESTORING PARISH LIFE

We are all eager to return to our Churches and restore parish life, but when this happens, we will have to be much more deliberate. We need to be thoughtful, patient, and cooperative. These have been difficult months being kept outside the doors of our parishes, but while the Liturgical services were continuing, your names were being constantly lifted up in prayer. As we prepare to restore parish life, we are providing this outline to assist you and welcome you back with open hearts.

Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

✠ METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS OF SAN FRANCISCO

WHEN CAN I COME TO CHURCH?

- There are many factors to consider when determining when you can return to Church. Of course, compliance with the authorities and when this is allowed in your respective area is the first and most important step. Each parish must also implement the Metropolis "Readiness Guide" which addresses appropriate preparation for the health and safety of all those in attendance.
- Based on occupancy and physical and social distancing, there will be strict limits placed on how many people may gather for services. Please be patient! We will do our best to accommodate everyone as often as possible.
- If you have health conditions that make you more vulnerable, you are still "safer at home." We understand! Please know you are in our prayers, regardless if you can attend church right now.
- Wearing a face covering will be required by everyone attending the service.
- Out of respect and concern for the wellbeing of others, please stay home if you are not feeling well. It is better to be cautious than risk your own health and possibly expose others to any illness.

NEW CONDITIONS, NEW BEHAVIORS

- We know that people like to sit in "their" same pew when they come to church, as well as with their friends. Because of social distancing requirements, not all pews will be allowed to be occupied. In addition, only people who reside in the same house may sit together. Please be mindful of this and follow the direction of the ushers. Do not deviate from where you are directed to sit.
- Most parishes in our Metropolis will continue to live-stream their services for the benefit of those unable to attend. Please continue to utilize technology to stay connected to Divine Services, educational programs, youth ministry activities and fellowship with your fellow parishioners.

SACRAMENTS AND SERVICES

- We are surrounded by a "cloud of witnesses" with the Saints who have been offering intercessory prayers for all of us during this pandemic. However, please be reminded that venerating icons should only be done by bowing and making the Sign of the Cross.
- As you approach for Holy Communion, please abide by social distancing and other guidelines as directed.
- We know that out of reverence and respect the hand of the priest is kissed, however this practice is presently not permitted.
- Once a parish is open, funerals may take place in the church, funeral home or graveside, in accordance with local authorities. The guidelines for maximum attendance and proper social distancing will continue to be followed.
- Because of the tactile nature of baptisms and weddings, these sacraments are not yet allowed to be scheduled, unless there are extenuating circumstances. As conditions surrounding the pandemic change, this directive will also be addressed accordingly.