

# CHAPEL OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

## Guidelines for Promoting Health & Safety during the Liturgy Summer 2020

The care and protection of the vulnerable has been central to the Christian tradition from the very beginning. Indeed, these values are found in our most beloved sacred stories and embodied in cherished practices such as the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. Love for one another has been at the core of our preparations at the Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas and is fundamental to the measures outlined below. As the St. Thomas community resumes common prayer and worship this summer, we ask for your goodwill, patience, and cooperation as we strive to be attentive to one another's needs during our celebrations of the Sacraments.

These guidelines are not going to be our new normal for the long term. Rather, they are necessary transitional steps as we persevere in navigating current risks while looking forward to the vibrant worship we will return to after the pandemic. We earnestly await that day with profound hope and continue to pray for a swift end to this medical and humanitarian crisis.

The content of these protocols is based on guidance from the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis and the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions.

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### *General Expectations for the Assembly and Liturgical Ministers*

- Please stay home and refrain from attending any liturgy in person if you are in a high-risk or vulnerable population:
  - Over age 65
  - Have preexisting health conditions
  - Have tested positive for Covid-19, have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, or show any symptoms which cannot be attributed to seasonal allergies.
- If you are not ill, please follow these practices while you are at the Chapel for the well-being of all members of our community of faith:
  - Wear a face covering or mask throughout the liturgy.
  - Maintain 6 feet of distance in all directions between different households when choosing where to sit and during the distribution of communion.
  - Use hand sanitizer regularly, especially as you enter the chapel or touch high-contact surfaces, such as door handles and handrails. Dispensers are available near the chapel entrances and elsewhere in the chapel.

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## General Adjustments to Liturgical Celebrations at the Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas

- 2 out of every 3 pews are not available for use to ensure proper distancing.
- Holy Water fonts and bowls have been emptied and removed.
- Congregational singing is discontinued at this time due to the higher risks of spreading respiratory droplets associated with singing.
  - Instead, we encourage you to sing within your heart or consider humming along with the cantor.
- Hymnals have been removed the pews, and only a simple, disposable worship aid will be available. If you prefer to follow the texts of the readings and other parts of the Mass, please bring your own resource, such as *Magnificat*, *Give Us This Day*, or a smart phone app.

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## Adjustments to Parts of the Mass

- Introductory Rites
  - There will be no entrance procession using the center aisle of the nave.
  - The Gloria will be recited; the text is provided in the worship aid.
- The Liturgy of the Word
  - Listen attentively to the proclamation of the Scripture readings and psalm response.
  - Refrain from joining with the cantor during the psalm and gospel acclamation.
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist
  - Collection plates will not be passed through the congregation.
    - A basket will be available near the sanctuary in which you can make an offering
    - Consider donating online at [www.stthomas.edu/campusministry](http://www.stthomas.edu/campusministry)
  - Eliminate or minimize physical contact during the Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace
    - Consider alternative gestures for the Sign of Peace, such as a bow or a nod toward your neighbor.
  - Communion Rite
    - We will endeavor to retain the Communion Rite at its usual place in the Order of Mass.
    - Only hosts will be distributed during Holy Communion due to health concerns related to sharing a common chalice.
    - The Archdiocese strongly encourages communicants to reverently receive communion in the hand, a practice that has existed since at least the 4<sup>th</sup> Century and aids in safeguarding all members of the community from exposure to the virus.
    - The Communion procession has a new route

- If you are seated in the nave, approach the Communion minister from the side aisle and then return to your seat via the center aisle.
- To maximize distance between members of the assembly, only one section of pews will receive at a time.
- Stay six feet apart from other congregants while approaching the Communion minister and returning to your seat.
  - Hand sanitizer is available near the top of the aisle as you move toward the communion minister; please cleanse your hands before receiving.
  - Keep your mask or face cover in place as you process, only temporarily adjusting or removing it to consume the Blessed Sacrament after receiving it from the minister.
- Concluding Rite
  - There will not be a closing hymn or song.
  - After the conclusion of Mass, allow for sufficient distance between households as you depart the Chapel.