



Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church

4020 Lomas Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110
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May 23, 2021

Solemnity of Pentecost

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady of Fatima,

Following the release of the most recent Health Order (May 14, 2021) issued by the New Mexico Department of Health, Archbishop Wester met with the COVID Response Team of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, and issued the following instructions:

1. While the new health order allows houses of worship to hold indoor religious services at up to 100% of capacity, the New Mexico Department of Health strongly encourages that indoor religious services be limited to 75% of capacity in “turquoise” counties, 50% in “green” counties, and 33% in “yellow” counties. At the Archbishop’s instruction, we will continue to practice these limits.
2. Masks are to continue to be worn by all regardless of vaccination status, except celebrants, deacons, lectors, cantors and choir members while performing their respective vocal liturgical functions. Children under the age of 3 years are exempt from wearing a mask.
3. Social distancing is to continue to be observed.
4. Per the Pastor’s judgment, Holy Communion may be restored to its normal place in the Mass. Social distancing should still be observed by those in the Communion line. Our Lady of Fatima Parish will restore Holy Communion to its normal place in the Mass effective Monday, May 24, 2021. This means that after receiving Holy Communion, persons should return to their pews for the Prayer After Communion and the Final Blessing and Dismissal.
5. The option to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, while now permitted under certain restrictive conditions, will not yet be implemented at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, though we anticipate that it will be offered as an option in the not-too-distant future.

6. Singing is allowed by choirs only, whose members have all been fully vaccinated. Social distancing is recommended for choir members but, can be somewhat relaxed where necessary.
7. Deacons and one or two altar servers may be utilized at Mass, maintaining masks and social distancing.
8. Dispensation from Sunday Mass is still provided for those who judge it necessary for the health of themselves or others.
9. Pastors retain the authority to utilize more (but not less) restrictive measures should they feel it necessary or prudent.

As you know, the issue of restrictions has been particularly contentious throughout the pandemic. However, charity towards the vulnerable obliges safety over comfort or “the normal”. The state projects a wider relaxation of restrictions when the state vaccination percentage reaches approximately 61%, currently projected to be near the end of June. Further updates/relaxation on restriction guidance for the Archdiocese will be provided as needed.

Finally, I wish to thank you – our parishioners – for your continued prayers and support. Even with the advances that have been made in combating the pandemic, these remain challenging times, and I am so grateful for your encouragement. I understand that these changes can be frustrating, but please believe that my underlying goal is obedience to our Archbishop, the safeguarding of your health, and providing for your spiritual needs to the very best of my ability. Please be patient as Fr. John Trambley, Fr. Anthony Ezeaputa, and I adapt to the changing circumstances. May God bless you and keep you safe, and let us pray for one another.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen Schultz

Very Rev. Stephen Schultz, Pastor

An Act of Spiritual Communion recommended by St. Alphonsus Liguori:

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.