



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2020

Basilica to Reopen to the Public on Monday, June 22

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will reopen on Monday, June 22, in accordance with Phase Two Guidance for COVID-19 as issued by the District of Columbia Mayor's Office and Health Department.

The Basilica has been closed to the public since March 17 for what is believed to be the first time in its nearly 100-year history for a non-weather-related event. During this extended closure, the Basilica was intensively cleaned and sanitized and enhanced protocols were put in place in preparation for the safe return of the faithful to America's Catholic Church.

During Phase Two, entry into the Basilica will be limited to 100 persons at a time. Mass, Confession, and operations schedules will be adjusted until further notice.

Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, states, "While we anxiously await the day when we can more fully open the doors of Mary's Shrine, we are grateful to take this first step in reopening America's Catholic Church." He adds, "The priests, religious and staff of the Basilica are eager to welcome the faithful back and ask for prayers and patience as everyone adjusts to this 'new normal' in these continued, unprecedented times of the coronavirus pandemic."

Adjusted operations, schedules and protocols are as follows:

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Basilica's hours of operation will be from 7:30 am to 5 pm daily.

VISITOR GUIDELINES FOR ENTRY INTO THE BASILICA

All visitors must wear a face covering at all times, except as directed for the reception of Holy Communion.

Entry into the Basilica will be through the front lower level East Entrance (Gift Shop side facing Michigan Avenue).

Prior to entry, all visitors must have their temperatures scanned via a non-contact infrared forehead thermometer administered by Basilica personnel outside the East Entrance doors. For the health, safety and welfare of all, any visitors exhibiting symptoms of illness and/or a temperature above 100.3 degrees Fahrenheit will not be permitted to enter the Basilica.

Before entering the Basilica, all visitors must sanitize their hands with hand sanitizer provided to them.

Upon entry, visitors must provide their name and phone number for 30-day retention as requested by the District of Columbia Health Department to assist with contact tracing should the Basilica be made aware of a case of COVID-19.

Once inside the Basilica, visitors must maintain a social distance of 6 feet from others, visit designated areas only, abide by all signage, and follow the direction of Basilica personnel for the health, safety and welfare of all.

MASSES

In order to allow for maximum participation at Mass with required social distancing, all Daily and Sunday Masses will be celebrated in the Basilica's Great Upper Church until further notice.

The Basilica's Mass schedule has been adjusted to allow ample time for sanitizing the Great Upper Church between Masses. Daily Mass (Monday through Saturday) will be celebrated at 8 am and 12:10 pm. Sunday Mass will be celebrated at 9 am, 12 noon, 2:30 pm (en español), and 4:30 pm.

Face coverings must be worn at all times, except for the reception of Holy Communion.

Visitors must be seated in marked pews in order to maintain social distancing. Family seating is available.

Holy Communion will be under one species.

When it is time to receive Holy Communion, visitors must follow the directives of Basilica Ushers and Staff.

Immediately following each Mass, Mass attendees must exit the Great Upper Church through the East Side doors as directed. Re-entry will only be allowed through the front lower level East Entrance of the Basilica, following the same entry protocol.

CONFESSIONS

Confessions will be available Monday through Saturday from 9 am to 11 am in the Transept Chapels of the Great Upper Church (Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady Help of Christians, Our Mother of Perpetual Help, and Mary, Queen of All Hearts). There will be no Confessions on Sundays until further notice.

Face coverings must be worn at all times during Confession.

Penitents will still have the option to confess anonymously or face-to-face.

PRIVATE PRAYER

The Crypt Church of the Basilica will be open for private prayer from 9 am to 5 pm daily. Private prayer in the Crypt Church will be limited to 30 minutes to allow others the opportunity to enter and pray.

GIFT SHOP & BOOKSTORE

The Gift Shop and Bookstore will be open daily from 9 am to 5 pm. Visitors must wear a face covering and follow social distancing measures in both stores.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Additional information and answers to anticipated frequently asked questions may be found at www.nationalshrine.org/faq.

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The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is the largest Roman Catholic church in North America and is one of the ten largest churches in the world. Dedicated to patroness of the United States, the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception, the Basilica is our nation's preeminent Marian shrine and patronal church. The National Shrine, often referred to as America's Catholic Church, will celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the placing of its foundation stone on September 23, 2020.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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