

Dear Parish Family,

We have been unable to gather as a community for such a long time, but I have some good news. On Tuesday, June 9th we will reopen for the celebration of Mass. We have been asked by the Bishop to keep the weekday Mass attendance that week small. Starting with the Vigil Mass on Saturday, June 13th we will resume our regular weekend schedule of Masses.

You are not expected to necessarily return immediately. Bishop Sullivan has extended the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass as well as the requirement to make your Easter Duty. If you are elderly or high risk for COVID -19, we encourage you to stay home. Mass will continue to be live streamed on Facebook at the 5pm and 9:30 Mass. Likewise, parents with young children who may find it difficult to social distance, should stay home. If you feel sick, especially with any respiratory illness, please stay home.

If you choose to stay home and watch Mass, the Bishop has given permission for you to receive the Eucharist at specific times without coming to Mass. So, if you are healthy enough and would like to receive, there will be two opportunities weekly. They are Saturday 6:00 – 6:30 pm and Sunday 12:00 – 12:30pm. Do not arrive early and do not enter the church before those times. This will help us to empty the church before you come in, to not have any cross traffic.

We are doing everything possible to keep you safe and that requires your cooperation. The church has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. After each Mass we are wiping down pews and other surfaces people might touch. Hand sanitizer will be readily available, and we ask that you use it. Those distributing Communion will use hand sanitizer before they start and possibly may stop during the distribution to do it again. They will also be wearing masks while distributing Communion. Naturally, the Precious Blood will not be distributed.

There are a few things we are requiring of you. You MUST wear a mask or face covering. You MUST keep 6 feet apart, entering, exiting, and going to and from Communion. Ushers will seat you in marked seats keeping 6 feet apart starting front to back. Maybe you will find a new favorite seat. We ask that you use your bathroom at home before Mass and only use the restrooms for emergencies. We cannot thoroughly clean them after every use. There will be disinfectant wipes for your use in the restrooms.

We know this is all difficult and perhaps stressful, but it is what we need to do to comply with the directives from Bishop Sullivan and Governor Murphy and most importantly to keep us all as safe as possible. This is called Phase I. It will get easier.

What to expect when you arrive:

*Two volunteer 'guides' will be outside the front door of the church counting heads and reminding people to social distance. We can only have 105 people per Mass in the church.

*Enter only by the front door and exit by the two side doors only.

*Inside there will be two more 'guides' to help with traffic flow.

*Ushers will be seating people as mentioned above.

*Seats will be marked with tape as single seats, couples and pews designated for families. Please be patient as we may need to make some adjustments to accommodate everyone.

*Every other pew will be taped off not to be used.

*The Hall will be set up for overflow and used if necessary, with the Mass live streamed and Communion brought over at the end of Mass. The entrance will be through the front door only.

*Missalettes have been removed and we are working on a way to provide hymns and prayers.

*There will be no actual collection. As you enter, please drop your offering/envelope in the box provided.

*There will be no Offertory Procession or Sign of Peace.

*Communion will be distributed at the very end of Mass after the final blessing. After you receive, you may exit immediately out the side doors. Directions will be given.

*When approaching for Communion please keep 6 feet apart in line. There will be markers on the floor to remind you. Naturally, when you get to the front of the line, you will need to lower your mask. Please do not receive on the tongue at this time.

As you know, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are in short supply. We are stocking up, but it is hard to predict how much we will use. So, if you see some and can pick it up for church or have extra at home, it is appreciated.

We have missed you as much as you have missed gathering as a community to worship our Lord. We look forward to seeing you when you are comfortable coming back.

Many blessings,

Father John