

## **BEING CATHOLIC IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC**

### **Part II - Returning to Life**

May 12, 2020

I have not Flocknoted (a new verb I just created) because there was nothing new to report, and I figured you had probably had enough of me between the bulletin and preaching at Mass. I have been praying for you though, and I hope each of you has experienced blessings, even amid the crosses we are bearing.

#### **MASS APPEAL**

Well, I finally have great news to report. **We will resume the public celebration of Mass on MONDAY, MAY 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 AM.** Why on Monday instead of Sunday, the Lord's Day? The requirements of social distance (SD) present many challenges, as do other requirements. SD will reduce the capacity (800) to less than a third of what we normally can hold in church. We need to skip two pews for every pew used, as well as keep households/individuals six feet apart on either side. We have to mark the pews so that people can know what six feet looks like since some of us picture four feet (fishermen) as being six feet. Obviously, household members do not need to social distance which allows a little more seating. There is also the issue of getting people to and from the pews while maintaining SD as we walk and move. The Archbishop wisely decided that if we start on a Monday, we can work out the kinks before Sunday.

The problem still remains as to how to get everyone in Mass when capacity is slashed. As at least a partial solution, the Archbishop is doing two things. **The dispensation from Sunday Mass continues at least through the summer for all who are present in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.** (One is NOT obliged to watch live-streamed Mass or go on weekdays, either.) However, to maintain our spiritual life with Christ and the Church, we are encouraged to participate in weekday or Sunday Mass as much as we can. If we spread ourselves out over the weekdays and weekends, many more people can come to church. Some people think that we could tell people what Mass to go to, either by lottery or by alphabetical listing. The problem with such plans is that the lottery concept becomes complicated, especially for those who are not online. An alphabetical plan would work in theory only if we knew exactly how many people would be coming. (My fortune-telling ability is worse than my mathematical ability.) We will watch throughout the weeks to see how things are working out. (I never thought I'd see the day when I would be telling people to just go to Mass during the week, but then I never pictured something we can't see bringing the world to a halt.) This is not to dissuade you from coming to Sunday Mass, but to encourage people to "spread out" over the week.

Because the allowance to gather in a large number is contingent on strictly following SD directives, the Archbishop has ordered that once the church is full, the doors be locked so that no one else may enter. (People can always leave.) This may seem drastic, but places not following the law could affect the entire diocese. If you come to church and it is already full, I urge you to try again or pray at home.

**Recorded Mass for Sundays will continue to be available online.**

**In order to facilitate people's work schedules, we will have Masses at the following times beginning TUESDAY, May 26<sup>th</sup>. (May 25<sup>th</sup> is Memorial Day so Mass will be at 7:30 AM.)**

Mondays	7 PM	Tuesdays	7:30 AM	Wednesdays	7 PM
Thursdays	7 PM	Fridays	7:30 AM		
Saturdays	7:30 AM, 4 PM	Sundays	8:30 & 11:15 AM; Spanish 2 PM		

The weekday Masses will not be a repeat of Sunday Mass, but with the texts assigned for that day.

In order to prepare church and to clean it after each Mass, church will open 30 minutes before Mass and close 15 minutes after Mass has ended. You may always use the Eucharistic chapel for prayer as long as SD is maintained. I am sorry for the inconvenience.

**Enclosed with this letter is the procedure we will follow for Masses.** I ask that you read it over. I will also have a podcast (or of whatever you call it when I am on the parish web page) next week explaining all of this.

#### **SACRAMENTS AND DEVOTIONS**

**Baptisms** may resume on the weekend June 6-7, but they will not be celebrated at Mass. Please contact Jessica Hollerman to schedule a time for baptism.

**The Sacrament of Reconciliation** will remain on Tuesdays as it has been, but for **Saturdays during this time, it will move** from the afternoon **to 8:15- 9:15 AM.**, beginning May 30<sup>th</sup>. This frees me up to be able to make any preparations which must take place before 4 PM Mass.

**Funerals** may have the number of people in attendance according to state regulations. People will be asked to sit in the marked areas of church.

**For families who have had to celebrate small funerals**, whether at Mass, the funeral home, or cemetery, you are invited to have a Mass or service with a greater number of people at any time that is available.

**Morning Prayer** may resume at 6 AM on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Monthly 24-hour Eucharistic Exposition** will resume on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> following the 7 PM Mass, provided there are two people assigned to each hour of adoration, as required by liturgical law.

#### **PARISH OFFICE**

**We are hoping to have the parish office open by June 1<sup>st</sup>** but are awaiting further direction on this. However, if you need anything, please feel free to call and leave a message.

#### **WELCOME ERIC HOLLIS**

I am happy to announce that Eric Hollis will begin working as our Pastoral Minister on Monday, May 18th, even if that means working from home. While COVID 19 has shut down structures in church and society, life continues to go on, and care of people as well. WE ARE GLAD TO HAVE YOU ON BOARD, ERIC.

#### **WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IT ONLY MAKES CENTS (& DOLLARS) TO KEEP UP ON THE COLLECTION**

One of the things that this pesky little virus does not stop is the delivery of the US mail. I salute our postal workers for their diligence. The only downside to their faithful service is that they continue to bring bills. We are currently receiving about two-thirds of our regular collection, which is a sign of the generosity and commitment of so many of you, and I am indeed grateful. Unfortunately, the bills have not reduced themselves by a third, so at this point we are about \$75,000 behind budget and could be \$90,000 behind by the end of the month. Add to this that our festival has been postponed from June until late summer and "Harrison, we have a problem."

If you have not been sending in a contribution, I am asking that you prayerfully consider doing so, either by mail or online through WE SHARE on the parish website for a one-time donation or better yet, to give regularly through automated giving., click on GIVING under the Parish Mission Statement. Because we have parishioners who are in difficult financial situations and cannot give, if you can give more, it will be a great help. Enclosed is an envelope for your donation.

I am always amazed at your generosity and know that you will continue to come through for the glory of God and the salvation of his People.

#### **WE ARE HERE FOR YOU**

If you are experiencing financial hardship during this time, please do not hesitate to contact the St. Vincent de Paul Society (513-300-7492) or Deacon Don (513-235-3430) for assistance or direction. If you are bearing emotional burdens or life is wearing you down spiritually, physically, or emotionally, please call Deacon Don or myself (513-367-9086 x5). We will do what we can so that you do not have to bear the crosses of life alone.

#### **THREE SCORE AND FIVE YEARS AGO**

It seems like we just celebrated Fr. Dorrman's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination as a priest, but his 65<sup>th</sup> is right around the corner (May 28<sup>th</sup>). While we may not be able to gather in a big way to celebrate, we can send him greetings and pray in thanksgiving for his ministry and his life and for continued blessings upon him. God bless you, Fr. Bill, good and faithful shepherd.

#### **TO OUR GRADUATES**

Whether it is your last year of college, high school, or grade school, you deserve to have a celebration of your accomplishments, and I am saddened that these aren't occurring as planned. I am praying for you that you may be able to celebrate in some form with family and friends, but also that you do not confuse the celebration of your accomplishments with the accomplishments themselves. Your accomplishments have formed you for life, matured you, and are fertile soil on which to continue to grow, while the celebration of them will become only a memory. May you be strengthened by this experience. "It is your reaction to adversity, not the adversity itself, that determines how your life's story will develop." Dieter F. Uchtdorf

#### **KEEPING IN TOUCH**

Thanks to the parish staff, Pastoral Council, and Social Action Ministers, we tried to contact all parish families by phone to see how things are going for you. If you did not receive a call, we may have the wrong phone number. Please call Jessica at 513-367-9086 x217 and leave your number and email.

#### **FROM THE CROSS COMES GRACE**

One of the things we discovered from the phone calls is that most people were being taken care of by family, friends, or neighbors. Considering the strangeness of our situation, I am edified to see people reach out in care and not withdraw into self-centered attitudes and behavior. May God continue to bless us with his gifts that draw life and grace from the crosses life deals us. –Fr. Jeff

# PRAYING IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Part Two: Returning to Church

## PLEASE READ BEFORE COMING TO MASS

### "JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM"

1. Public Mass will resume on MONDAY, MAY 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 AM at St. John's.
2. Although we are taking every reasonable precaution we can, we cannot guarantee that a person will not catch COVID 19 when attending St. John's.

*Therefore, the obligation to participate physically in Sunday Mass is lifted for everyone who lives and is visiting in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati at least through the summer. Also, one is not obliged to watch Mass on TV or participate in weekday Mass, although these are encouraged if you find them helpful for your spiritual life.*

3. Because of social distancing protocols, the capacity of church is reduced to about 200 people.

*Recognizing this issue, we encourage people to come to one of the weekday Masses instead of everyone on Saturday afternoon or Sunday. We will have some evening Masses during the week to meet this need.*

### BASIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES THAT UNDERLIE OUR PRACTICE & PROCEDURES

1. Core to our life as Catholic Christians is gathering in prayer, especially on Sunday for Mass, in obedience to command of Jesus to "Do this in memory of me." It is only for serious reasons that a Catholic misses Sunday Mass, and for the extremely serious reasons that Sunday Mass not be available to the people.
2. Core to our life as Catholic Christians is a profound respect and defense of human life, which shares uniquely in divine life. Integral to human life is the health and wellbeing of persons.
3. True freedom for the Christian is not simply having the right to make any choice they wish (within the confines of the law) such as we find in civil law. Christian freedom is the ability to choose what is the ultimate good for oneself *and* others. To live in Christ, therefore is not simply to view life from an egocentric perspective, but from the perspective of the good of others.
4. The Church does not promote the imposition of unnecessary burdens on people; however, in the complexity of a crisis, the options of debate and exceptions to the rule may need to be set aside for the good of all. This does not mean that what has been determined is the best solution but will allow movement at this particular time and situation.
5. The Church has always taught that that obedience to proper authority is a virtue and not an option to disregard because we may not like it. One has a right to register complaint, but unless the action called for violates a moral good it is to be followed. (Obedience as a virtue is not well accepted in American culture since we tend to put individual liberty above all other goods.)

### PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE



Anyone whose health may be jeopardized or may jeopardize others health are NOT to attend Mass. Anyone with *symptoms* of COVID 19, a cold, or flu are NOT to attend church. If you think someone you have been in contact with may have COVID 19, please do not come to church. If you are diagnosed with COVID 19 within two weeks of being at Mass, please contact Fr. Kemper (513-367-9086 x 215).

### SOCIAL DISTANCING

The Only Thing I Want in My Face Is Grace



6 ft.



6 ft



Think INSECT – 6 feet

Distancing from those who you do not live with is 6 feet all around, from the time you leave your car until you return to your car.

- ❖ Because of the need to control the number of people in church, entrance into church will only be through the left and right FRONT doors of church. Once we reach that number, the doors of church will be locked, as directed by the Archbishop. You may or may not agree with this, but that is required for public gatherings to occur.

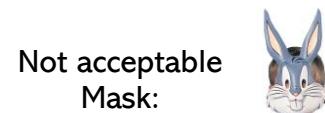
- ❖ In order to maintain the distance, we need to leave a space of two pews before and after where people will sit and a clear marking of six feet side by side. To achieve this, pews will be marked for space between one individual, a couple, and families of various sizes. It may be that a family may not be able to sit together, although our hope is that families can be gathered together.
  - In light of these arrangements, you might not be able to sit where you wish.
  - There will be ushers to direct people to an appropriate section.
- ❖ Every effort should be taken to keep from moving in front/behind others once you are in the pew. If you are a person who normally has to use the restroom during Mass, please go before and sit on the end of the pew.
- ❖ The Communion procession will follow the normal pattern and aisles, except for:
  - there will be only one line in each aisle (not two by two) and will begin with those on the left side of the Communion procession aisle. Once that side is completed, the right side of the aisle comes forward.
  - six feet is to be maintained coming forward and returning to the pew.
  - if you are not going to receive Communion, you should come forward and simply turn to return to your pew; this will keep from persons passing in front or behind another.
- ❖ Upon leaving church:
  - It is expected that everyone stay until all are dismissed in order that people are not climbing over others in the pew to leave (and because one does not leave the King's banquet early; this is God's dinner, not carry out pizza.)
  - People will leave church from the last pews first at the direction of the ushers. This will keep people (in the aisles and in the pews) facing one another. It is important to maintain the six-foot distance.
  - Please do not remain in the gathering area and plaza to talk, since it is necessary to keep people moving to their cars. (This goes against everything we have tried to build for a sense of community, but it is necessary in this case.)

## **GOTCHA COVERED (OR UNCOVERED)**

Who Is That Masked Man?

You are encouraged but not required to wear a mask. The priest and deacon, when they are in the sanctuary, and a good distance from the people, do not wear masks. Eucharistic Ministers and the priest and deacon will wear them for the distribution of Holy Communion. Ushers will wear them when they are directing people before, during, and after Mass.

NOTE: Unlike human beings, all masks are not created equal, however almost any mask reduces the strength of the flow of air from your mouth and nose into the atmosphere.



## **And a Bunch of Other Stuff**

1. All hymnals, missalettes, and pew envelopes are removed from church until further notice. Upon arriving, please take a (NEW, UNUSED) hymn sheet. Leave the hymn sheet in the pew where you sat so that we know that this spot needs to be sanitized. The used hymn sheets will be discarded.
2. The collection baskets will be at the doors of church.
3. Our HVAC system will be set to exchange indoor/outdoor air at a greater rate. This may affect the efficiency at which the church is cooled.
4. Because of its small size the cry room will be closed, but the Community Room will be open. (It is against the law to put misbehaving children in someone else's car.)
5. These procedures may be changed according to developments in the COVID situation.
6. There is to be no physical contact during the Lord's Prayer. The sign of peace, reception of Holy Communion on the tongue and from the cup are suspended until further notice. Ministers of Holy Communion will use hand sanitizer upon coming to the altar.
7. In all of this, remember patience, understanding and forgiveness is central to life in Christ. "I'm sorry." "May I?" and "Thank you" go a long way.

Thanks for your cooperation on these matters.

It is important that they be followed by EVERYONE.