May 21, 2020

Dear parishioners,

If you have been paying attention to the news, you have likely heard that Bishop Walkoviak is allowing Public Masses to begin again on May 29. In this time of social distancing things will look different, but it is a joy to know that we can once again gather for the celebration of the Eucharist. Starting on Friday, May 29, we will begin our typical Mass schedule following the guidelines of the Diocese.

In talking with some of you, I know that each person is in a different place regarding the pandemic. I know that many of you are looking forward to returning to the celebration of Mass. Some of you may not yet be ready. Some may feel more comfortable attending daily Mass with a smaller amount of people. Bishop Walkoviak recognizes that there are people who are vulnerable to COVID-19 and has dispensed all Catholics within the diocese from their Sunday obligation through June 30. He recommends that you stay home if you are vulnerable to the disease. Bishop is also asking those who are sick to stay home.

Anyway, we are making preparations for your return. To summarize the guidelines that our diocese has prepared in consultation with public health officials, doctors, and the diocesan staff, you will see the following: Our capacity will be at 25% so we will be spaced out within our churches. Pews will be taped off to help with social distancing. Only members of the same family/those who reside together may sit together. All members of the faithful (age two and older) be asked to wear a mask. Please know that you will need to remove your mask right before communion. Things will also look different within the celebration such as any physical greetings will be omitted, the Precious Blood will not be offered, and the offertory will be collected in a new way. Finally, there will be extra sanitation of the Church to prevent the spread of disease.

I say all of this as a summary and know that I look forward to seeing you all again soon. It has been a long and difficult road that we have been on. I have listened to some of your frustrations, and I know that this news will bring much joy as well. I am very thankful to the many people who have reached out to me to make sure that I have been doing well. Personally, this news is the best that I have heard during this time. I would also like to thank those of you who have kept sending in your offertory into the parish whether you give online, mail in your contributions, or drop them off. Your generosity is a testament to your commitment to this parish.

Please give me a call in the parish office or send an email if you have any questions.

May Our Lady, Health of the Sick, help all those who are sick and protect us from any sickness.

Our Lady, Health of the Sick, Pray for us!

Fr. James VanderLaan